

VAIRAGYA SHATKAM

Of

King-Sage Bhartrihari

##

English Exposition by:-

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Ayodhya (Faizabad, U.P.)

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

**

© By Author—All rights reserved by the author. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without permission of the author-Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

NOTE: Author's Books are available at:--

- (1) www.amazon.com in its Kindle + Paper-Back Print Editions.
- (2) www.pothi.com in a Print edition.
- (3) www.draft2digital.com and its various vendors' platforms in E-Book edition:
URL: <https://www.draft2digital.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia>
- (4) www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com
- (5) Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia
- (6) Goodreads:
https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia

Language: English.

Contents

Dedication: Page:- 4

Preface: Page:- 5

Life Sketch of Bhartrihari: Page:- 10

‘VAIRAGYA SHATKAM’ of king-sage BHARTRIHARI: Page:- 14 -- 111

Appendix: About the Author: Page:- 112

-----*****-----

DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram whom even Lord Shiva had revered and worshipped. And surely of course to Lord Hanuman who was a manifestation of Shiva himself. Finding no words to express my profound gratitude to Ram, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

“He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!” [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

VAIRAGYA SHATKAM

Of

King-Sage Bhartrihari

PREFACE

During the golden age of ancient India (320 A.D.—544 A.D.), known as the Gupta period, there was a great king of the Parmar dynasty whose name was 'Bhartrihari'. He ruled over the kingdom of Malwa with its capital city at Ujjain. He was the elder brother of the legendary king Vikramaditya on whom is founded the Hindu era known as 'Vikram Samvat'. He was the younger step-brother of Bhartrihari.

In his early life, Bhartrihari is said to be a very lustful and passionate man who was accustomed to enjoying all the sensual pleasures and material comforts that came easily to him by the virtue of his being a great King of a mighty kingdom. But due to certain developments in his personal life as detailed in a sketch of his life given below, he was so disenchanted and disgusted with this world that he developed a profound degree of renunciation for everything in life. He realised that there was no true happiness in this material world, and all relations in it are superficial and givers of sorrow and grief. He realised that there is no certainty that the object one loves and longs for in the world, the relations that he so assiduously develops and nurtures in life would actually be faithful to him and are sustainable, because betrayal and selfishness are more often the norm than the exception. So there was no guarantee of actually deriving sustainable joy and happiness from any thing or any relationship in the world, no matter how faithful and devoted a person himself may be towards them, and therefore dismay, grief and sorrow are his share in the end. What is the use of pursuing such a world? Would it not be wise instead to search for a way to find a source of abiding and everlasting joy and happiness?

He discovered that true peace and happiness lay elsewhere, and not in seeking them in the gross world and its sense objects that are all deluding and entrapping for a person just like the enticement of water that is seen by a thirsty man in a hot desert. So Bhartrihari forthwith shook-off and broke free from the fetter of delusion and attachment to the world that he had unwittingly tied around his neck like a millstone till that time when spiritual wisdom and enlightenment dawned upon him. He forsook all his relationships and engagements with the world, completely renounced his worldly ties, and leaving his kingdom to his younger brother, he became a recluse, wondering in a state of ecstasy and bliss that comes naturally to a mendicant whose only aim in life henceforth is self-realisation and attainment of liberation and

deliverance for his soul. He took to the life of ‘Sanyas’ and developed a profound degree of ‘Vairagya’ (renunciation, detachment, dispassion). He became an exalted Yogi (ascetic), and got initiated into this discipline by becoming a disciple of the legendary Guru Gorakhnath who himself is regarded as an incarnation of Lord Shiva, the patron God of ascetics, the third God of the Trinity, and the most enlightened of all the Gods of the Hindu pantheon.

Bhartrihari has composed three wonderful books on his experiences of life—viz. ‘Sringar Shatkam’, ‘Niti Shatkam’ and ‘Vairagya Shatkam’. The first book ‘Sringar Shatkam’ deals with the charms of material world and its sensual objects. The second book ‘Niti Shatkam’ deals with ethics and morality; it lays down the codes of conduct one should follow in one’s life. It is the third book ‘Vairagya Shatkam’ which is the subject matter of our present Book. The spiritual ideas of renunciation, dispassion and detachment from the gross, deluding and transient world of material sense objects, of the futility of expecting happiness, joy and peace in this world, of the search for ways to find eternal peace, bliss and blessedness for the self, and of the sense of fulfilment, ecstasy and beatitude that one experiences when one has freed himself from worldly shackles and attained true freedom for his soul which would ensure his deliverance from all misery and grief that are associated with this life—and so many other related spiritual themes find their resonance and reiteration in the Upanishads that especially deal with ‘Sanyas’. A separate Book titled ‘The Sanyas Upanishads’ has also been published by this humble author. The esteemed reader and a seeker of truth and true spiritual knowledge would be well advised to read the two books, viz. ‘The Sanyas Upanishads’ and the present book ‘Vairagya Shatkam of Bhartrihari’, together to get a comprehensive grasp of this spiritually elevating subject because they supplement and compliment each other perfectly. Both these Books describe the futility of hoping to find happiness and joy in worldly pursuits, and the inherent sorrow and grief that one finds if one is involved in the sensual objects of this world. It aims to motivate and guide a spiritual aspirant to the ultimate objective of all endeavours—viz. obtaining bliss and joy which is lasting and meaningful. This can be achieved only when one renounces the illusionary charms and the falsehood associated with this material world, and instead searches for the source of truth and true bliss that is possible by self-realisation.

These verses of ‘Vairagya Shatkam’ are in beautiful Sanskrit, and are as succulent and vibrant as any composition on the spiritually elevating theme of Sanyas can ever be written, having immensity of depth and profundity of wisdom contained in them that would move even the sternest of hearts of those people who don’t seem to have time for such things, who think that life is meant to enjoy the world and its sensual pleasures, that there is no sense in making oneself suffer by abstaining from such enjoyment, and that true happiness and joy is in this world itself and no where else. Such foolish people deserve pity for they don’t realise the grave error of judgement they are making.

In this book ‘Vairagya Shatkam’, meaning ‘a hundred verses on renunciation’, Bhartrihari has laid great stress on the futility of worldly pursuits, especially of the sensual objects, the temporary nature of the body, the falsehood and the entangling nature of the pleasures of the gross world, the transient and perishable nature of life itself, the spiritual value of detachment, dispassion and renunciation, on importance of spiritual upliftment and enlightenment, and the value of leading a life of equanimity,

of Tapa (austerity, penance and observation of strict righteous vows), of Yoga (contemplation and mediation) and of true Shanti (peace and bliss).

A careful reading of the Vairagya Shatkam motivates a person to wake up to the reality of where true peace and happiness lies in his life; it arouses his conscience and makes him think that he must do some good for his own welfare. Such a person who has woken up from his delusions realises the futility of remaining submerged in an illusionary world of dreams in the false hope that it would give him whatever peace, happiness, comfort and pleasure he desires, as this false world has no pith in it. He is motivated and inspired to renounce the sensual pleasures obtained from the gross objects of this world, because all such pleasures are misleading and false. Instead he now endeavours to find eternal peace and joy for himself by spending his time and energy in 'self-realisation' that would lead to attainment of liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation for his soul—a stature that would grant him, that would vouchsafe for him the nectar of eternal blessedness, bliss, beatitude and felicity.

To add spiritual flavour to our present Book, to enhance its value and aid in an in-depth understanding of the theme of 'Sanyas', I am including herein below the entire text of Bhartrihari's book 'Vairagya Shatkam' consisting of a hundred wonderful verses that enlighten us about the spiritual advice this great ascetic Bhartrihari has given regarding renunciation and dispassion that is entirely based on his personal experiences of life and the falsehood of its myriad charms. Like in the main part of our book, we shall be reading here all the original verses of Vairagya Shatkam with their corresponding English phonetic sounds, which is then followed by a verse-by-verse English rendering in a way that brings out their spirit and charm in a simple language.

The philosophies of 'Vairagya' and 'Sanyas' go hand-in-hand, and are like the two sides of the same spiritual coin. 'Vairagya Shatkam' not only helps to bridge the gap between the teachings of the Upanishads and their practical application but also helps to elaborate upon them from a practical perspective because the great ascetic known as Bhartrihari had personally understood what Vairagya and Sanyas actually mean, what spiritual reward they bring to a spiritual aspirant, and how one feels a true sense of bliss, true peace and true joy overflowing upon him once he begins to proceed ahead on this auspicious path. The advice that Bhartrihari gives and the ideas that he conveys through the medium of the verses of Vairagya Shatkam are not something hypothetical but are based on his personal experiences of life, of the life's bitterness, delusions and falsehood, and how best one can avoid falling into this dark and dry pit.

Sooner or later in everyone's life comes a point when he feels disillusioned and disenchanted with the world and his life, when he is overcome with frustration, dismay, grief and pain, when he needs some comfort and support for his sagging spirit, when he needs guidance whereby he wishes to put behind his past and search for a way to start afresh on a path that would lead him to get true peace and happiness for himself, that would bestow upon true bliss and abiding comfort. It is then these sublime verses of 'Vairagya Shatkam' open a completely new world for him, an ethereal world marked by extreme bliss and pristine pure joy, a world characterised by ecstasy, blessedness and beatitude of an eternal kind, something that sustains and is true, and not of the type of world that only deludes and gives a false sense of pleasure,

comfort and happiness that are simply illusionary, superficial, shallow, hollow and transient.

We can also look at the Upanishads vis-à-vis Vairagya Shatkam from another angle. Whereas the Upanishads talk in an authoritative but formal language as if a teacher is teaching his students profound truths, and are more in the form of doctrines, edicts and philosophy that appeal to the intellect and the mind, Bhartrihari's verses are juicier as they touch the heart more than the mind. The reason in Bhartrihari's succulence and lucidity is that he had had personally experienced all the joys and comforts of life as a great king who had all the pomp and pageantry, all the material pleasure and comfort of the world at his disposal. He had enjoyed whatever sensual pleasures life had to offer to its full, but in the end it left a bad taste in his mouth, like the case of someone getting disgusted by eating too many sweets. His personal experience of pain and sorrows led him to sincere and severe disenchantment with this world, and this puts an element of utter sincerity and earnestness in his verses which might lack in a bland and emotionless discourse of the Upanishads which are often said in sober, crisp and clinical manner.

The teachings of the Upanishads are much like the formal environment of college or university where there is a wise and learned teacher who is surrounded by eager students who wish to learn some topic. The teacher teaches in a very methodical and clinical manner that, though, is able to explain the subject thoroughly, but at times it leaves some of the students bored and dozing. Herein comes the value of the succulent verses of Bhartrihari which add the beauty of poetry into what otherwise would have been a sterile and disinfected discourse on the theme of Sanyas and Vairagya as taught by the Upanishads. The sages and seers who taught the Upanishads had always lived a life of renunciation and detachment from the world unlike Bhartrihari who had first tasted the 'sweetness' of worldly life before renouncing it when he had realised its 'bitterness'. So the difference in the method adopted by the Upanishadic teachers and that of Bhartrihari for disseminating the same knowledge of Sanyas and Vairagya becomes obvious—the former were more formal, sombre and analytical in their approach, appealing more to the intellect and the mind, while the latter was more warm and succulent as it appealed to the heart and captivated the mind more closely because anything that appeals to the heart is also attractive to the mind of a person.

Bhartrihari poured out the pain of his heart in succulent verses that directly touches the listener as he was speaking from his personal experiences of the futility of seeking joy and happiness from this material world of sensual objects; the Upanishad teachers however taught the same subject in a more formal, orthodox, serious, thoughtful, clinical and analytical way. Bhartrihari's case was like that of a person who has suffered and experienced the excruciating pain that comes with a stab from a knife, and so he is better placed to explain and give an idea of this pain than a doctor who has merely studied about the pain in a medical text book.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude for Sri Somil Bharti who has voluntarily done the 'Roman Transliteration of the verses with Diacritical Marks' to help me complete the Book in a comprehensive manner, making it useful even for those readers who do not know the Sanskrit alphabet. Somil Bharti has taken time from his busy schedule to do this job of the Lord God; he has completed his B.Tech

from the Indian Institute Of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K), and is presently pursuing his MBA course at Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta (IIM-C).

To add more value to the Transliteration, I have done the 'Phonetic Transliteration of the verses in English' also. The English renderings of the verses that follow are a comprehensive commentary on these verses.

I hope that my respected readers would thoroughly enjoy the nectar of spiritual wisdom and experience the expression of joy and elation that comes to a person when he has realised the truth of life and the bliss that comes by renouncing all delusions and falsehoods associated with this world that pours out through the verses of this wonderful classical composition known as 'Vairagya Shatkam of Bhartrihari'.

Amen!

Author: Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

Date: 21st March, 2017

Full address of Author—36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg,
P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123
Distt.—Faizabad, U.P. India.

Mobile: +919451290400, +919935613060

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >
(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia

-----*****-----

VAIRAGYA SHATKAM

Of
King-Sage Bhartrihari

A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH OF BHARTRIHARI

Bhartrihari was a great king, a gifted poet, a philosopher, a thinker, and one who was sensitive enough to hear the voice of his inner-being, the call of his soul that wanted him to search for eternal happiness and bliss, to proceed on the path that would lead him to break free from the cycle of birth and death with its incumbent chain of misery, sorrow and pain. So he decided not to waste the precious but limited time of his life's innings in pursuing things and matters that were superficial, impermanent, entrapping and givers of pain and sorrow, by renouncing this world and its falsehood, and instead seek the path of Truth, the path that leads to eternity by self-realisation that makes an aspirant one with Brahm, a spiritual state which grants the aspirant beatitude, felicity, bliss and blessedness of the highest kind.

He expressed all his feelings and views, the conclusions he had drawn about life and its false charms that he had got through his personal experiences and by a close observation of the world around him, in the form of exquisite poetry that was not only succulent from the mere literary angle but was also extremely rich in wisdom and enlightenment—as it came from a person who had tasted first-hand the best of what life can offer to a person in terms of material comforts, sense enjoyments and physical charms, and how everything turns sour and bitter in the end, leaving that person feeling disillusioned, disenchanted, disgusted and rootless. Such a person is qualified to share his experiences with others, and to advice them the futility of pursuing this world and its sensual objects.

If the art of composition and the uniqueness of style of writing poetry by Bhartrihari is excellent and sublime, showcasing how erudite and scholarly he was, the spiritual message that these verses of Vairagya Shatkam convey is even more exhilarating, it is extremely elevating, enlightening and awakening for the soul inasmuch as it fills one's heart with ecstasy and joy at the prospect of being able to get rid of the chain of misery and pain one experiences in one's life, and instead be able to achieve eternal bliss that one can obtain by following the auspicious path advised by this great king-turned-ascetic. No amount of discursive writing or attempt to explain the verses at length can do justice to the depth of meaning and the sweetness of the nectar of spirituality that these verses contain in a symbolic pitcher called "Vairagya Shatkam" that has been moulded out of them.

As we have read in the beginning of this narrative, Bhartrihari was a king of Malwa with its capital city in Ujjain. After being enthroned as a king of Ujjain, Bhartrihari became engrossed in worldly pleasures. He became a very passionate and lustful man,

and his attachment with one of his two wives was so great that he spent most of his time with her. Vikramaditya tried to persuade him to realize his foolishness, but all was in vain. On the contrary, at the behest of the queen with whom he was extremely infatuated, Bhartihari exiled Vikramaditya out of the city.

In the capital city of Ujjain, within sight of the palace, there lived a Brahmin with his wife. They were old and poor, and having nothing else to do, they decided to spend their lives in practicing austerity and devotion. They used to do Tapa and Vrat, i.e. they fasted and refrained from drinks; they stood on their heads and held their arms for weeks in the air; they prayed till their knees were like pads; they disciplined themselves by using wire to beat their own selves for any transgression they might have made; they walked about almost bare even during the cold season, and in summer they sat within a circle of fire lit from firewood.

These sacrifices made them very venerable and helped them to reach a high spiritual stature that is but natural for all those who practice austerity and devotion, but at the same time the lower forms of gods that inhabit lower heaven became jealous of them. So these selfish gods devised a device to corrupt the mind of the pious couple. One day, a celestial messenger appeared before them to offer them a reward for their strenuous sacrifices—it was in the form of a ‘Fruit of the Kalpa Tree’, which was supposed to be a divine Apple. This fruit has the mystical power to grant an eternal life to anyone who eats it.

As soon as this heavenly messenger disappeared, the Brahmin wished to taste this divine ‘fruit of eternity’. No sooner had he opened his toothless mouth to eat the fruit of immortality than his wife intervened and advised him not to do so. She told him that if he became ‘immortal’ he would have to continue to suffer from all the horrors and woes associated with life in this gross world all over again, something from which the couple had always wanted to escape in the first place. They wanted final Moksha, i.e. an end to the cycle of birth and death, and not to be born again and again as a young couple. So she said that the husband should not eat the fruit himself nor share it with her.

The Brahmin was undecided for some time, but finally was convinced that his wife was giving him a sane advice. He concluded that the lower gods do not want him to attain salvation and emancipation because they want him to continue doing sacrifices and offer them oblations and offerings of food so that these gods can find sustenance. Angry and disgusted, he reproached the gods and was about to throw the divine fruit into the sacrificial fire to burn it to ashes when his wife grabbed it. She told him it was a precious fruit that should not be so easily wasted, but let them make some gain from it instead of letting it turn to ashes in the fire, something which would not yield them anything except to feel sorry later on.

The wife advised the Brahmin to take that fruit as a gift for the king and get some wealth as a return gift from him! See how ridiculous it is! On the one hand she advises her husband not to eat this fruit as it would bind them to this material world because they will become immortal and cannot attain final deliverance from this world, and on the other hand she yearns for material gain!!

Anyway, the deluded Brahmin went to the palace and presented the divine fruit to king Bhartrihari, describing to him its singular value, its magical powers, its importance and significance. He pampered and appeased the king by telling him in words that the best of the things in this world rightly belongs to a great king of his stature, so he had brought it for him as a tribute. In return, if the king be pleased, he can grant the supplicant some token reward for the obeisance paid by him.

The king was overjoyed at getting this priceless fruit that is rare even for the gods. So he thanked this Brahmin, and taking him to his treasury he told him to take away as much gold dust as he can carry. The hopelessly deluded and greedy Brahmin is said to have not only filled all the folds of his garment but even stuffed the golden dust into his toothless mouth to carry as much as he could!

Bhartrihari knew the magical powers of this divine fruit—that it would make a person who eats it live an everlasting life. He loved his queen so passionately and was so enamoured of her youthfulness and obsessed by it that he wished her to be young and lustful for eternity so that he can enjoy her company forever. So he took this fruit and gave it to her to please her, and to impress upon her about the intensity of his mad love for her.

Unfortunately for king Bhartrihari, the queen was secretly in love with a horse-keeper! So she pretended to be glad at receiving this precious gift from her husband and told him that she would eat it later on after bathing. The unsuspecting king was unaware of the queen's infidelity, so he agreed and left the fruit with her.

The unfaithful queen in due course gave this fruit to her own lover, the horse-keeper. This fellow was in love with another lady, a prostitute. So he took the precious fruit gifted to him by the queen and gave it to the prostitute. As destiny would have it, this prostitute was a pious woman in her heart. Upon learning about the fruit's ability to grant eternal life, she thought to herself that it was useless for her as she was a sinful woman and it would be futile to live such a life forever by eating this divine fruit. However, the king was highly respected by his subjects because he a good and just ruler who ruled his subjects judiciously with equanimity, compassion, understanding, wisdom and tolerance. So if such a king could live a long life by eating this fruit, the kingdom would be happy and prosperous for a long time to come. This was one good thing she would be doing in her otherwise sinful life. So she took the fruit and presented it to king Bhartrihari.

When the prostitute gifted the fruit to the king and highlighted its virtues, the king was taken aback; he was aghast, utterly stunned and left speechless for he had recognised the fruit as the one he had given to the queen. The queen's infidelity was all too obvious. So the king felt extremely sad, dismayed and disgusted in his heart. Suddenly, a surge of renunciation and detachment overwhelmed his mind, his heart and his psyche. His conscience was aroused; he told himself that it is wrong to have faith in this world for even the one whom one considers as being faithful and loyal may turn his or her back against him without a notice and without any compunction.

This single incident was the water-shed event in the life of Bhartrihari; it was the turning point in his life. It is said that he ate the divine fruit himself and decided to spend the rest of his life wandering like a contented mendicant who would preach the

world the illusionary nature of happiness in this world, of the falsehood of all pleasures related to the material world, and the futility of pursuing sensual objects as a mean to obtain comfort and joy from them.

Bhartrihari was so disgusted with his own behaviour that he had neglected his other wife in favour of this unfaithful lady who had betrayed his trust. But first he wanted to test the loyalty of his first wife whose name was Pingla, whether or not she was devoted and loyal to him. So he devised a device whereby one day he told her that he was going to a distant forest to hunt, and would return by evening. However, since the king wished to test this queen's integrity, he did not turn up on time, and the queen was extremely worried, and stopped to eat and drink. As was planned by the king, his guards returned late the next day with a downcast face, and remorsefully informed the queen that the king had been killed while hunting a man-eater lion. They showed her a bunch of blood-stained clothes purported to be that of the king. The queen fainted out of shock and died instantly.

Meanwhile, Bhartrihari was watching these developments secretly, and when he saw what had happened he was full of mercy for this queen, and regretted at his own lack of wisdom and at the rough treatment he had meted out to her, though she was so loyal to him, to favour the other queen who proved to be so disgustingly unfaithful, immoral, sinful and corrupt.

The death of this loyal queen filled Bhartrihari with a sense of profound renunciation and detachment. This single event changed the course of his life forever. He realised that true happiness does not come from where one expects it to come, but it lies somewhere else unknown to the person. Therefore, a wise and erudite person is one who seeks this unseen and unknown source of true happiness instead of wasting away his life and time in falsehood and delusions. So, he abdicated the throne in favour of his younger brother Vikramaditya, renounced every material comfort and pleasure that came to him naturally as a great king, and took to 'Sanyas'.

It is said that he took initiation in the life of an ascetic from the venerable ascetic named Gorakhanath who is said to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself.

Bhartrihari penned his anguish and pain as well as the way to overcome them in the form of a hundred verses that he composed that came to be known as "Vairagya Shatkam". These verses are sung by roaming ascetics and mendicants all over India, especially the northern half of the country. These friars sing these verses melodiously to the accompaniment of sombre tune emanating from the strumming of a single-string musical instrument called an 'Ektaara'. ["Eka" = one; "Taara" = wire or string.]

When sung melodiously and heard attentively, these verses seem to stir the soul and have a profound impact on one's mind and heart with their soulful rendering that is usually done in a grave, solemn and haunting voice. The hearer soon feels a surge of inner calm flowing over him, and his mind begins to wonder whether he should not follow in the footsteps of Bhartrihari in order to find eternal peace and happiness for himself, instead of remaining engrossed in the deluding mundane world and its mundane affairs.

-----*****-----

VAIRAGYA SHATKAM

Of

King-Sage Bhartrihari

१ तृष्णादूषणम् ।

चूडोत्तंसितचन्द्रचारुकलिकाचञ्चच्छिखाभास्वरो

लीलादग्धविलोलकामशलभः श्रेयोदशाग्रे स्फुरन् ।

अन्तःस्फूर्जदपारमोहतिमिरप्राग्भारमुच्चाटयन्ः चेतःसन्नि

योगिनां विजयते ज्ञानप्रदीपो हरः ॥ १ ॥

Roman Transliteration of the Verses with Diacritical Marks:

(1) tr̥ṣṇādūṣaṇam ।

cūḍōttaṃsitacandracārukalikācañcacchikhābhāsvarō

līlādagdhavilōlakāmaśalabhaḥ śrēyōdaśāgrē sphuran ।

antaḥsphūrjadapāramōhatimiraprāgbhāramuccāṭayanḥcētaḥsadmani

yōgināṃ vijayatē jñānapradīpō haraḥ ॥ 1 ॥

English Transliteration of the Verses with Phonetics:

(1) TRISHNAA-DUSHANAM

CHOODOTTAM-SITAMCHANDRA-CHAARU-KALIKAA-CHANCHACHI-KHAA-BHAA-SWARO

LILAA-DAGDHA-VILOLA-KAMA-SHALABHAHA SHREYO-DASHAAGREY

SFURAN /

ANTAHA-SFURJADAPAARMOHA-TIMIR-PRAAG-BHAAAR-MUCHCHAATAYANHA-CHETHA-SADMANI

YOGINAAM VIJAYATE GYAANA-PRADEEPO HARAHA //

English Rendering, with explanation and commentary on the verses:

(1) Lord Shiva, who is like a lamp that is kindled by the flame of true knowledge that comes with self-realisation, resides in a symbolic temple in the heart of self-realised and enlightened ascetics.

On Shiva's head there is an illuminated moon, shining in its radiant best and adorning the Lord's head like a magnificent ornament.

Lord Shiva destroys Kaam (sensual pleasures and attractions for the world) like a moth (a metaphor of sensual pleasure) that is killed when it goes near a flame. [Here, Lord Shiva's inherent spiritual wisdom and enlightenment are referred to as the 'flame'. These virtues are so dynamic and powerful that they reduce to ashes, or they automatically destroy or neutralise or eliminate or exhaust all temptations related to the gross world and its sensual charms. The 'moth' is a metaphor for these temptations and charms.]

The presence of the Lord in the heart of the ascetic symbolises the radiance and the splendour of spiritual wisdom, of true knowledge and of true enlightenment that sprouts and radiates from inside the heart of a self-realised ascetics, thereby eliminating the darkness symbolised by infinite forms of attachments and longings that may have been present within and without the ascetic's heart earlier.

[To wit, an ascetic who has conquered Kaam is a personified form of Lord Shiva, and the Lord in turn stands for the eclectic spiritual virtues of wisdom, enlightenment and self-realisation.

This verse describes Lord Shiva. Refer also to verse no. 17. The poet compares him to a lamp enkindled by the flame of true knowledge of the 'self' which resides in the heart of ascetics. The radiant moon adorning the head of Shiva is like his magnificent ornament. Shiva has so much spiritual energy that he automatically destroys sensual pleasures which are compared to moths here that burn to death when they go near a flame. This light of knowledge illuminates the inner-being of a wise ascetic by removing all traces of darkness symbolised by ignorance that may be present in his heart and mind.]

भ्रान्तं देशमनेकदुर्गविषमं प्राप्तं न किञ्चित्फलम्
त्यक्त्वा जातिकुलाभिमानमुचितं सेवा कृता निष्फला ।
भुक्तं मानविवर्जितं परगृहेष्वाशङ्कया काकवत्
तृष्णे जृम्भसि पापकर्मपिशुने नाद्यापि सन्तुष्यसि ॥ २॥

(2) bhrāntaṁ dēśamanēkadurgaviṣamaṁ prāptaṁ na kiñcitphalam
tyaktvā jātikulābhimānamucitaṁ sēvā kṛtā niṣphalā ।
bhuktaṁ mānavivarjitaṁ paragr̥hēṣvāśaṅkayā kākavat
tr̥ṣṇē jṛmbhasi pāpakarmapiśunē nādyāpi santuṣyasi ॥ 2॥

(2) BHRAANTAM DESH-MANEKA-DURGA-VISHAM PRAAPTAM
NA KINCHIT-FALAM
TYAKTVAA JAATIKULAA-BHIMAAN-MUCHITAM SEVAA KRITAA NISHFALAA /
BHUKTAM MAANA-VIVARJITAM PARGRIHE-SHVAA-SHANKAYAA KAAKAVATA
TRISHNE JRIMBHASI PAAPA-KARMA-PISHUNE NAADYAAPI SANTUSHYASI //

(2) [On greed/avarice/rapacity/yearning.] Greed and avarice (Trishna), born out of ignorance, is never satisfied. I've travelled far and wide in many countries, through inaccessible wild forests, across mountains and water-bodies, and I visited portals of

great forts (where great kings live) and traversed intractable lands in search of riches and things to satisfy my never-ending desires, but all my efforts were in vain! [To wit, my desires, my greed and avarice, never subsided no matter how much I got and how hard I tried.]

Towards the end of satisfying my greed and avarice, I had become so rapacious that I had stooped very low so much so that I had no compunctions while sacrificing the dignity of my good birth in a high caste and family. I had also allowed my self-esteem to be trampled underfoot by being servile to the wealthy and the rich (in the hope that I will be fruitfully rewarded by them so I can accumulate wealth and get material prosperity).

Like the stupid crow, I suffered indignity and disrespect by going from house to house to eat morsels of (left-over) food.

But my desires, my greed and my needs never ended. Indeed, they lead a person to unwittingly indulge in sinful and demeaning deeds. No matter how hard a person tries to gratify them and satisfy them, but these desires and wishes go on increasing by leaps and bounds.

[To wit, I served like a serf so many rich masters in order to seek favours from them, and in the bargain I had also compromised on my high lineage, caste and self respect. All was futile and in vain. I lived on crumbs of bread in houses of strangers, serving them like a humble servant/supplicant, always fearful of annoying them like a scared crow. But to what end or purpose —I was nowhere; I got no peace or satisfaction. I committed so many sins and misdeeds, but to no avail. My greed is still as robust as it was before. Nay, it is only increasing by the day.

The poet is disgusted with his own desires, lusts, yearnings and greed. He went to so many places, traversing through inaccessible forests and forts; he sacrificed his self-respect and dignity to serve the rich and the powerful. His greed was so overwhelming that it overshadowed all his wisdom and sense of propriety and conscientiousness because he ate like a greedy crow every morsel of food, stale or leftover, that was given to him without paying any attention to the rightfulness of such a self-insulting act which tarnished his reputation and undermined his own dignity. So he now repents and says that in spite of his best efforts to satisfy his greed, it only went on increasing the more he tried to appease it.]

उत्खातं निधिश्ङ्कया क्षितितलं धमाता गिरेर्धातवो
निस्तीर्णः सरितां पतिर्नृपतयो यत्नेन संतोषिताः ।
मन्त्राराधनतत्परेण मनसा नीताः श्मशाने निशाः
प्राप्तः काणवराटकोऽपि न मया तृष्णे सकामा भव ॥ ३॥

(3) utkhātaṁ nidhiśaṅkayā kṣititalaṁ dhmatā girērdhātavō
nistīrṇaḥ saritāṁ patirnr̥patayō yatnēna saṁtōṣitāḥ ।
mantrārādhanatatparēṇa manasā nītāḥ śmaśānē niśāḥ
prāptaḥ kāṇavarāṭakō'pi na mayā tr̥ṣṇē sakāmā bhava ॥ 3॥

(3) UTKHAATAM NIDHISHANKAYAA KSHITITALAM DHMAATAA GIRERDHAATAVO
NISITIRNAHA SARITAAM PATI-RNRIPA-TAYO YATNENA SANTOSHITAHA /

MANTRAA-RAADHANA-TATPARENA MANASAA NITAAHA SHAMSHAANE NISHAAHA
PRAAPTAHA KANAVARAATAKO-API NA MAYAA TRISHNE
SAKAAMAA BHAVA //

(3) [On greed/avarice/rapacity/yearning.] Oh greed, oh rapacity, oh avarice, oh yearning (Trishna)! Under your influence and coerced by you, I dug deep into the earth in search of hidden treasures, but found nothing; I reduced to rubble huge mountains such as the Mainaak Mountain in search of precious stones, I blew into fire so I could extract precious metals from the earth (ore) I so laboriously extracted, I sailed across the rivers and mighty oceans in search of riches, but for what purpose? I tried to please the king, but in vein; I spent many a sleepless nights near cremation/burial grounds chanting Mantras to acquire mystical powers, but I got no where.

I did not succeed in getting peace and contentedness.

Oh Trishna (greed, avarice, rapacity)! Let me be at peace now. Now please leave me alone; I am fed up with you.

[This verse also deals with unfulfilled desires and greed. The poet describes what he did to satiate his greed—(i) He excavated ground to discover treasures; (ii) He billowed at the fire with the full might of his lungs to extricate minerals from the ores excavated from the mountain called Mainaka; (iii) He crossed oceans in search of wealth that always eluded him; (iv) He tried to please kings and the rich; (v) He spent nights meditating and reciting mantras in grave-yards in order to acquire some supernatural powers. But inspite of all this strenuous effort, he could not get a cent in return. So now having learnt a bitter lesson, he urges his ‘Trishna’ to let him alone and be happy with whatever it has. The poet realises that even if he spends his entire lifetime to satiate his Trishna, he would no be able to do so. Refer to the next verse no. 5 herein below.]

खलालापाः सोढाः कथमपि तदाराधनपरैः
निगृह्यान्तर्बाष्पं हसितमपि शून्येन मनसा ।
कृतो वित्तस्तम्भप्रतिहतधियामञ्जलिरपि
त्वमाशे मोघाशे किमपरमतो नर्तयसि माम् ॥ ४ ॥

(4) khalālāpāḥ sōḍhāḥ kathamapi tadārāadhanaparaiḥ
nigr̥hyāntarbāṣpaṁ hasitamapi śūnyēna manasā ।
kr̥tō vittastambhapratihatadhiyāmañjalirapi
tvamāśē mōghāśē kimaparamatō nartayasi mām ॥ 4 ॥

(4) KHALAA-LAA-PAHA SODHAAHA KATHAMAPI TADAARAA-DHAN-PARAIHA
NIGRI-HAYAANTA-RBAA-SHPAM HASITAMAPI SHUNEYANA MANASAA /
KRITO VITTA-STAMBHA-PRATIHATA-DHIYAA-MANJALI-RAPI
TWAMAASHE MOGHAASHE KIMA-PARAMATO NARTA-YASI MAAM //

(4) In order to satisfy my greed and desires, I had tried my best to serve and please even those wicked but wealthy masters who were stupefied and arrogant by the pride

of their wealth. They had treated me disdainfully; I had somehow coped with their bad manners, ill treatment and haughty talk, suppressing my tears that welled up in my eyes and pained my heart. I had tried to show them that I agreed with their entire nuisance, and was faithful and obedient to them, by smiling and nodding my head in agreement to all the nonsense they uttered, though it was against my conscience.

Oh Greed? Say, what greater fool would you make out of me that I had danced to your tunes like a puppet (till now)? In spite of my submission to you, I could never gratify you; I could never satisfy you.

अमीषां प्राणानां तुलितबिसिनीपत्रपयसां
कृते किं नास्माभिरविगलितविवेकैर्व्यवसितम् ।
यदाद्यानामग्रे द्रविणमदनिःसंज्ञमनसां
कृतं वीतव्रीडैर्निजगुणकथापातकमपि ॥ ५॥

(5) amiṣāṃ prāṇānāṃ tulitabisinīpatrapayasāṃ
kr̥tē kim nāsmābhirvigalitavivēkairvyavasitam ।
yadāḍhyānāmagrē draviṇamadaniḥsaṃjñāmanasāṃ
kr̥taṃ vītavrīḍairnijaguṇakathāpātakamapi ॥ 5॥

(5) AMISHAAM PRAANAANAAM TULITA-BISINI-PATRA-PAYA-SAAM
KRITE KIM NAASMAA-BHI-RVI-GALITA-VIVEKAI-RVYA-VA-SITAM /
YADAA-DHYAA-NAAMAGRE DRAVINA-MADANIHA-SANGYA-MANASAAM
KRITAM VITA-VRIDAI-RNIJA-GUNA-KATHAA-PAATA-KAMAPI //

(5) What have I not endeavoured to do, what enterprise I did not enter into to serve the rich and the wealthy who were dulled in their mind by the intoxicating power of wealth they possessed because of my depraved conscience just in order to sustain my Pran (i.e. my ‘life’ represented by the five vital wind forces of life present inside my mortal body¹), not realising that this Pran is extremely unreliable, unsustainable, unpredictable, fickle and temporary like the drop of water on the leaves or petals of a lotus flower.

[The drop of water on the lotus does not stick to the body of the flower, and it falls down with the slightest movement of the flower. Likewise, the Pran that sustains my gross body, and which I erroneously think to be permanently with me, would leave me any time, without the least warning. But in spite of this, in order to ensure that this Pran would not abandon me, I begged and surrendered my self-esteem and exerted my self endlessly to serve like a serf, like a bonded slave even those people who were exceedingly mean, stupid and wicked, and who did not deserve any respect from me.

To wit, I served the rich because I got something to eat and give comfort and pleasure to my gross body. I did not realise that this body which I serve is mortal by its nature, and no matter how faithfully and diligently and strenuously I serve it, one day or the other it would betray me. I allowed my ‘self’ to be humiliated for the sake of this unfaithful fellow Pran that keep my body alive.

The poet repents thus: “For the sake of saving my life inside my body, for the sake of being alive in this world, is there any foolish and ignoble thing which I have not done? I had even served the most unworthy of persons; I had trampled my dignity and self-respect underfoot just to please these wicked and selfish people so that I can feed my body and get physical comfort. Say, how silly am I that I did not understand that the life and the body which I am trying to take well care of, are both transient and perishable by their inherent nature. Why would a man in his senses toil so much day and night to worry about a thing that would abandon him nonetheless, one day or the other? Wouldn’t it have been wiser for me if I had made the same effort to obtain something abiding and sustainable for myself? Why did I not pursue the path that would give me liberation from this transitory world and lead me to an eternal world of peace and bliss, the world of spiritual blessedness and beatitude? Why did I waste the energy of my vital winds to sustain my body which is innately perishable and a giver of pain, misery and torments?”]

[¹The five ‘Prans’ are the five vital winds that keep the gross body alive. They are called the ‘Pancha-Prans’, and are the following:

(i) Pran/Praan— this is the main vital wind and usually refers to the breath without which life is not possible; it is the vital wind located in the upper part of the body. It is the wind that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without this wind infusing life in the body no other wind would be of any significance to the creature. It is present in the mouth, nose, heart, navel, big toe of the leg.

(ii) Apaana—this is the wind that passes down the intestines, and is responsible for ingestion of food, its digestion in the intestines and the final excretion of the waste product from the body—its grosser content through the anus and its fluid contents through the urinary system of the kidneys. This is the wind that moves down in the body and is chiefly located in the lower part of the body—in the intestines and anus, lower abdomen, thighs, knees.

(iii) Samaana—it is uniformly present throughout the body and as the name itself suggests it is responsible for uniform pressure and balance in the body besides equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body by maintaining proper circulation of blood. Therefore its functions somewhat resembles that of Vyaana wind. It is said to be especially present in the ears which are said to be the specialized playing field for the Samaana wind as it helps maintain balance in the body through the semi-circular canals in the ears. It also helps to coordinate the ears and the intellect because the latter would base its decisions on what it hears with the aid of the ears.

(iv) Udaana—this is the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough. It is predominantly present in the hands, legs and the various joints of the body.

(v) Vyaana—this wind helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body as well as to ensure equal distribution of nutrients in the body by maintaining circulation. Hence, it works in close coordination with the Samaana wind. It also helps to control the functioning of the other winds. It is located in the ears, thighs, waist region, heels, shoulders and throat. [Refer Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 3, verse nos. 5-7.]

क्षान्तं न क्षमया गृहोचितसुखं त्यक्तं न संतोषतः
 सोढादुःसहशीतवाततपनक्लेशा न तप्तं तपः ।
 ध्यातं वित्तमहर्निशं नियमितप्राणैर्न शम्भोः पदं
 तत्तत्कर्म कृतं यदेव मुनिभिस्तैस्तै फलैर्वञ्चिताः ॥ ६ ॥

(6) kṣāntaṁ na kṣamayā gr̥hōcitasukhaṁ tyaktaṁ na saṁtōṣataḥ
 sōḍhāduḥsahaśītavātatapanaklēśā na taptaṁ tapaḥ ।
 dhyātaṁ vittamaharnīśaṁ niyamitaprāṇairna śambhōḥ padaṁ
 tattatkarma kṛtaṁ yadēva munibhistaistai phalairvañcitāḥ ॥ 6॥

(6) KSHAANTAM NA KSHMAYAA GRIHOCHITA-SUKHAM TYAKTAM NA SANTO-
 SHATAHA
 SODHAA-DUHA-SAHA-SHEET-VAATA-TAPANA-KLESHAA NA TAPTAM TAPAAH/
 DHYAATAM VITTA-MAHARNI-SHAM NIYAMITA-PRAA-NAIRNA SHAMBHOHA PADAM
 TATTATKARMA KRITAM YADEVA MUNI-BHI-STAI-STAI PHALAIR-VANCHITAAHA //

(6) I pretend to be righteous, pious and holy by forgiving others (a reference to those in whose hands I had to suffer indignities and self-depravation), but it is out of my inability to avenge the wrong done to me.

I have renounced the comforts of home and a householder's life by imposing exile on myself, but it was not out of true enlightenment that kindled dispassion or detachment in my heart but I yearned for more wealth. [To wit, I ventured to unknown places to explore avenues for more riches.]

I had to cope with the vagaries of Nature such as inclement weather, extremes of cold and heat, but it was not due to my wish to do Tapa (austerity and penance for religious merit). [I had voluntarily suffered physically for gaining some pecuniary benefits.]

Oh, how stupid am I that instead of doing some service at the holy feet of Lord Shiva (that would have given me true peace and a feeling of blessedness), I had subjected my vital forces to such strains, night and day, just to access things that are gross, perishable and givers of sorrow and grief (such as yearning for money and other worldly gains).

All these deeds done by me appeared to be similar to that done by great sages and ascetics, but while they obtained spiritual merit by doing these auspicious deeds I only wasted them away for selfish ends and satisfying my greed and desires (but in this effort too I also failed miserably). [Since I did Tapa to make worldly gains, the natural good effects that are resultant from doing them were wasted away by me. I deprived myself of their fruits.]

[This verse also reflects a repenting mood. The poet compares himself with an ascetic. Ascetics during the course of their penance, undergo a number of hardships, such as exposure to vagaries of seasons and climate. The ascetics bear insults with stoic neutrality and external stimuli originating from this gross world have no influence upon him as he is totally detached from this world of sense objects. Neither happiness nor sorrows move them. They forego pleasures of family by renunciation. The poet has also done all these, for a different purpose.

He did not practice renunciation, dispassion and detachment because he had developed some true sense of self-realisation and enlightenment which would

motivate him to pursue the spiritual path for attaining freedom from all entanglements with this deluding and artificial world of false charms, but because he was so greedy that he wanted more wealth and prosperity for himself. So had to leave the comforts of his home and family to wonder out to earn money and seek worldly fame and glory. And where did he land in this bargain? He fell in a dark pit of endless misery and grief that robbed him of his peace and happiness, of his self-respect and honour, forcing him to serve others like a bonded serf, and to beg from door to door like a vagrant beggar only to be treated with disdain and forced to eat discarded crumbs of stale and leftover food like a hungry crow. He did lament, but there was no alternative in the unfortunate situation he had allowed himself to fall voluntarily. He had to endure all sorts of insults and indignities, but this endurance was not due to his conquering of the senses and emotions like an ascetic does, but due to the compulsions of his circumstances.

He endured heat and cold for earning money; he offered the vital energy of his Pran to serve mortal humans who exploited his circumstances for their own comfort and pleasures. Say, why did he not serve the loving and caring Lord God who would have gone out of his way to bless the poet with not only what he had wished to get by serving other mortal beings but grant him spiritual blessedness and joy as a bonus that was not even asked for or expected.

The poet abstained from family comfort and allowed himself to suffer hardships; he did not serve his kith and kin which he ought to have done. Instead, he served those who would not even feel obliged to him; he toiled for the comforts and pleasures of other rich masters who were not even related to him. Is it not truly absurd, incredulous and hilarious; does it not prove how stupid the person is?

The poet regulated his breath strenuously and did prolonged meditation like ascetics do, but it was not done with the objective of attaining spiritual bliss that comes with experiencing of the true 'self', which is pure consciousness that resides inside one's own subtle heart as his Atma, but to focus his energy, effort and mind to find ways to earn money and to serve his masters diligently so that they are pleased with his service and reward him with pecuniary benefits. The result was that the poet lost on all the eclectic spiritual rewards that come naturally with doing meditation and contemplation, i.e. by doing Yoga and Dhyān respectively. Whatever fruits he did get were tempting from the without, but sour from the within.]

**भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ताः
तपो न तप्तं वयमेव तप्ताः ।
कालो न यातो वयमेव याता -
स्तृष्णा न जीर्णा वयमेव जीर्णाः ॥ ७॥**

(7) bhōgā na bhuktā vayamēva bhuktāḥ
tapō na taptam vayamēva taptāḥ ।
kālo na yātō vayamēva yātā -
str̥ṣṇā na jīrṇā vayamēva jīrṇāḥ ॥ 7॥

(7) BHOGAA NA BHUKTAA VAYAMEVA BHUKTAAHA

TAPO NA TAPTAM VAYAMEVA TAPTAHA /
 KAALO NA YAATO VAYAMEVA YAATAA
 STRISHNAA NA JIRNAA VAYAMEVA JIRNAHA //

(7) [On the wasting away of life.] I was never able to enjoy any of the sensual objects of this material world; rather it was they that got the better of me. [The temptations of the world so much deluded me that I behaved like a drunk person who loses his mental balance and does things that he ought not have done.]

I did not observe austerities, abstinence, continence and self control, yet my body is burning hot (i.e. tormented and suffering) as if there was high a fever. [To wit, though I tried to give all sorts of physical comfort to my body but it still suffered horribly. When I pondered over the matter I discovered that this suffering of my body was due to the three fires, called “Traitaap”, from which everyone suffers. These three fires are the torments inflicted upon a creature either by the world in which he lives (called Adhibhautik), by selfish gods and malignant stars (called Adhidaivik), or from spiritual matters (called Adhyatmik) that arise due to the creature’s delusions and ignorance and his neglecting of the Atma, the Soul.

I had never spent some time with pious and holy people so that I could have found some solace, succour from my suffering, and some good advice for my guidance. [I had rather indulged in pursuing the material objects of the gross world and its sensual charms.]

The caravan of time moves ahead relentlessly; I have run my course but my desires and wants haven’t abetted. Rather it’s the body that has become worn out and burnt out as it has become old and physically crippled. So I find myself in a pitiable condition. [After all the toil and the suffering, I gained nothing worthwhile. My body underwent wear and tear, and now it has become old and feeble so that even if I want to do something for my true good, I cannot.]

[The poet expresses his vexation with worldly pleasures. He says: “We have not enjoyed the pleasures; rather the pleasures have exploited us. We have not performed any penance because we did not get any reward worth the name; rather the penance has burnt us; they have sapped us of our vital energy, leaving us exhausted and moaning. We have not spent the time; the time has made us into a spent force. Desire and greed are not exhausted; rather we are exhausted and drained by desire and greed.]

वलीभिर्मुखमाक्रान्तं पलितेनाङ्कितं शिरः ।
 गात्राणि शिथिलायन्ते तृष्णैका तरुणायते ॥ ८॥

(8) valibhirmukhamākrāntaṁ palitēnāṅkitam śiraḥ ।
 gātrāṇi śithilāyantē trṣṇaikā taruṇāyatē ॥ 8॥

(8) BALIBHIRMUKHA-MAAKRAANTAM PALITE-NAANKITAM SHIRAH /
 GAATRAANI SHITHILAA-YANTE TRISHNAI-KAA TARUNAA-YATE //

(8) [On old age] My face has wrinkled, my hair has turned grey, and my limbs are giving away with age. But my greed and avarice, my yearnings and rapacity, are like a

young and youthful lady because they would never let me rest in peace, and they continue to tempt me towards all those things that would gratify my desires and yearnings. [To wit, though I have become old and feeble, my desire, greed, rapacity and yearning are always as robust and youthful as they were when I was young. They haven't abetted or diminished a bit. Rather, with the passage of time, they grow stronger, more robust and more demanding like a young woman.]

[This verse also deals with repentance. The poet laments that everything except 'desire and lust' gets worn-out by the time old age arrives. There are wrinkles on the face; the hair has turned grey; the limbs have become feeble; and the body has lost its energy and charm as it has become old and decrepit. The only thing that lingers in its youthful vigour is 'lust and passion, greed and avarice'.]

निवृत्ता भोगेच्छा पुरुषबहुमानोऽपि गलितः
समानाः स्वर्याताः सपदि सुहृदो जीवितसमाः ।
शनैर्यष्ट्युत्थानं घनतिमिररुद्धे च नयने
अहो मूढः कायस्तदपि मरणापायचकितः ॥ ९॥

(9) nivṛttā bhōgēcchā puruṣabahumānō'pi galitaḥ
samānāḥ svaryātāḥ sapadi suhrdō jīvitasamāḥ ।
śanairyaṣṭyutthānam ghanatimiraruddhē ca nayanē
ahō mūḍhaḥ kāyastadapi maraṇāpāyacakitaḥ ॥ 9॥

(9) NIVRITTAA BHOGECCCHAA PURUSH-BAHUMANOAPI GALITAA
SMAANAAHA SWARYAATAAHA SAPADI SUHRIDO JEEVITSAMAAHA /
SHANAIRYASHTYU-TTHAANAM GHANTIMIR-RRUDDHE CHA NAYANE
AHO MUDHAHA KAYASTADAPI MARNAA-PAAYA-CHAKITAA //

(9) [On awareness of old age that kindles renunciation.] {An old man's} His libido and passions have totally declined. The man's so many prides have vanished. His many friends and companions do not show the respect to him as they had been doing earlier when he was young. Many of his fellow compatriots of his age group have passed away, and many of his friends await their death.

He cannot get up without support, and that too with great effort, lifting himself on the support of a stick, tottering and limping along with its help when he attempts to move at all.

His eyes are clouded with a blinding veil of cataract. In spite of all these blatant and bold signals, the very mention of impending death almost astonishes and shocks this idiotic, stubborn and shameless creature. How unfortunate and stupid he is indeed!

[The poet says that all around him he observes the sign of old age. During this phase of life, all desires to enjoy anything are exhausted, ego and sense of prestige dry up, kind-hearted and dear friends either leave or are dead, one cannot stand without the support of crutches, and the eyes become blurred. In short, life becomes one big burden. But the greatest irony is that a person stills wants to live; he morbidly fears death. He does not realise that the longer his body pulls on the greater would be his

physical sufferings, and that the only way to get rid of this problem is to cheerfully embrace death.

This verse emphasises the point how a man is attached to the gross body and how his desires to live in this world and enjoy its comforts and pleasures do not abate inspite of the impossibility of this prospect ever materialising. In fact, the old person abhors even the mention of death; he thinks he will live forever even though he has seen before his eyes how others of his age have died irrespective of the best of care, both family attention and medical care, that they were given.]

आशा नाम नदी मनोरथजला तृष्णातरङ्गाकुला
रागग्राहवती वितर्कविहगा धैर्यद्रुमध्वंसिनी ।
मोहावर्तसुदुस्तरातिगहना प्रोत्तुङ्गचिन्तातटी
तस्याः पारगता विशुद्धमनसो नन्दन्ति योगीश्वराः ॥ १०॥

(10) āśā nāma nadī manōrathajalā tr̥ṣṇātarāṅgākulā
rāgagrāhavatī vitarkavihagā dhairyadrumadhvaṁsinī ।
mōhāvartasudustarātigahanā prōttuṅgacintātātī
tasyāḥ pāragatā viśuddhamanasō nandanti yōgīśvarāḥ ॥ 10॥

(10) AASHAA NAAM NADI MANORTHA-JALAA TRISHNAA-TARANGAA-KULAA
RAAG-GRAAHAVATI VITARKA-VIHAGAA DHAIRYA-DRUM-DHYAM-SINEE /
MOHAAVARTA-SUDUSTA-RAATI-GHAHANAA PROTTUNGA-CHINTAA-TATEE
TASYAAHA PAARA-GATAA VISHUDDHA-MANASO NANDANTI YGISHWARAAHA //

(10) Hope and expectations ('Aashaa') are like a flowing river, of which aspirations and desires ('Manoratha') are the water. This river has swift currents in the form of greed and yearnings for the sensual objects of the material world ('Trishnaa').

Different types of attachments are like the great crocodiles ('Graaha') that live in this river, and doubts and confusions and arguments ('Vitarka') are like the many aquatic birds that frequent it.

The river has such force that the many trees symbolised by the virtues of patience, tolerance and fortitude ('Dhairya-Drum') that grow near its banks are uprooted and swept away.

The river is very deep and so are its countless whirlpools symbolising the many delusions and ignorance ('Moha') that a creature has. The banks of this river are very steep and precipitous ('Protunga—Tatee'). This makes it a cause of much worry and consternation ('Chintaa') for a creature who stands on its bank ('Tata') because he is terrified at the sight of this formidable obstacle in the form of this river as he finds it impossible to cross over to the other side.

Verily and in all sooth, wise and enlightened ascetics who have a pure mind are not scared of this river, for they can cross over it to obtain supreme bliss and felicity for themselves.

[The 'river' referred to here is the gross mundane world in which a creature is trapped. Other symbolisms are obvious. Only those who have been able to control their wayward nature of the mind and the natural urges of their sense organs, those

who have learnt to exercise control over their desires and yearnings for the material world, are able to overcome the misery and pain associated with life in this world. Such wise and enlightened creatures attain true bliss and beatitude.]

न संसारोत्पन्नं चरितमनुपश्यामि कुशलं
 विपाकः पुण्यानां जनयति भयं मे विमृशतः ।
 महद्भिः पुण्यौघैश्चिरपरिगृहीताश्च विषया
 महान्तो जायन्ते व्यसनमिव दातुं विषयिणाम् ॥ ११ ॥

(11) na saṁsārōtpannam caritamanupaśyāmi kuśalam
 vipākaḥ puṇyānām janayati bhayaṁ mē vimrśataḥ ।
 mahadbhiḥ puṇyaughaiściraaparigrhītāśca viṣayā
 mahāntō jāyantē vyasanamiva dātum viṣayiṇām ॥ 11 ॥

(11) NA SANSAAROTPANNAH CHARITAMANU-PASHYAAMI KUSHALAM
 VIPAAKAM PUNYAA-NAAMAM JANAYATI BHAYAM ME VIMRISHTAHA /
 MHADBHIHA MUNYUO-DHAISHIRA-PARIGRHEETAA-SHCHA VISHAYAA
 MAHAANTO JAAYANTO VYASANA-MIVA DAATUM VISHAYI-NAAM //

(11) My experience of life after I was born as a human being has told me that there is no comfort and scope of welfare in any of the deeds that I do, no matter how diligently I do them, and consider them to be good and righteous. On the contrary, even the good deeds and their accompanying honours seem to be generating a lot of trouble and fear for me.

Birth in a good family and the physical comforts and honours which a person is fortunate to get due to his good and meritorious deeds in past life also give me no solace, instead they give me grief and misery as I find that gradually all comforts and pleasures dwindle and fade away the more they are enjoyed, giving place to pain and torments that go on ascending. A stage comes when the former totally vanishes and is replaced by the latter.

Therefore, those who are wise and enlightened realise that worldly enjoyments, pleasures of the senses, and the physical comfort from the material things of the mundane gross world finally come to a naught and are as perishable as the world itself.

[In the light of what has been said previously, the acts and experiences of life, whether they are related to the household or the world affairs, do not appear to me to be safe and comforting. Even good deeds and the accompanying honour appear to be generating some kind of hidden fear. Things such as a happy family life, pleasant circumstances and environment symbolised by smell of sandalwood etc. which a person is fortunate enough to gain from good deeds done in past births, appear to me to be causing misery, because such comforts taper off and gradually dwindle or get exhausted during the course of their enjoyment. What remains in the final analysis is grief and sufferings; everything comes to a naught.

Hence, wise people know that enjoyment of the sense organs and indulgences in worldly pleasures are like mortal vices that are better done away with while still there is time. Otherwise they would eat into the innards much like malignant cancer.]

अवश्यं यातारश्चिरतरमुषित्वापि विषया
वियोगे को भेदस्त्यजति न जनो यत्स्वयममून् ।
व्रजन्तः स्वातन्त्र्यादतुलपरितापाय मनसः
स्वयं त्यक्ता ह्येते शमसुखमनन्तं विदधति ॥ १२॥

(12) avaśyaṁ yātāraścirataramuṣitvāpi viṣayā
viiyōgē kō bhēdastyajati na janō yatsvayamamūn ।
vrajantaḥ svātantryādātulaparitāpāya manasaḥ
svayaṁ tyaktā hyētē śamasukhamanantaṁ vidadhati ॥ 12॥

(12) AVASHYAM YAATAA-RASHCHIRATARA-MUSHITVAAPI VISHAYAA
VIYOGGE KO BHEDASTYAJATI NA JANANO YATSWAYAMAMUNA /
VRAJANTHA SWATAANTRYAA-DATULA-PARITAAPAAYA MANASAH SWAYAM
TYAKTAA HAYETE SHAM-SUKHA-MANANTAM VIDADHATI //

(12) [On futility of worldly pursuits.] My sensual indulgences, however long-lasting they appear to be in my lifetime, have to ultimately come to an end. Hence, I must forsake them voluntarily on my own free will or they will leave me sooner rather than later; there is no doubt about the latter event happening. So, why not discard them and get rid of them now?

It is such a regrettable state of affairs that, even though I am aware of it, I still remain engrossed in worldly affairs and pursuits, I still yearn for sensual pleasure and gratification. When these ultimately abandon and betray me, I would feel let down.

Hence, is it not wise if I choose to forsake them with my own free will and at a time convenient to me so that I can attain infinite happiness and peace of mind?

[To wit, when the selfish world and its false material charms would ultimately betray me, what difference would it make if I leave them myself voluntarily or they force me to leave them later on? Forsooth, if I willingly discard them now I will be spared the grief and pain that comes when a man is betrayed by anything that he has great trust in, that he has immense faith in, that he thinks is his and would last him forever. In the latter situation I will be worse off because I would have wasted so much time of my life in pursuing false happiness, a time which I could have put to good use in search of true happiness. Hence, is it not wiser and proper on my part to abandon this world of falsehoods and illusionary charms right now when still there is time for me to seek true spiritual happiness and eternal peace for myself.

Enjoyments are bound to disappear with the flow or current of time. When they end what remains is nothing but misery, grief and pain. Hence, why should a person wait till the time he is forced to tear away from enjoyments and gratifications; why not relinquish them out of one's volition as it gives the satisfaction of having discarded something voluntarily instead of having to part with it forcibly? This way a person gets greater peace and abundant joy.]

ब्रह्मज्ञानविवेकनिर्मलधियः कुर्वन्त्यहो दुष्करं
 यन्मुञ्चन्त्युपभोगभाञ्ज्यपि धनान्येकान्ततो निःस्पृहाः ।
 सम्प्राप्तान्न पुरा न सम्प्रति न च प्राप्तौ दृढप्रत्ययान्
 वाञ्छामात्रपरिग्रहानपि परं त्यक्तुं न शक्ता वयम् ॥ १३ ॥

(13) brahmajñānavivēkanirmaladhiyaḥ kurvantyaho duṣkaram
 yanmuñcantyupabhōgabhāñjyapi dhanānyēkāntatō niḥsprhāḥ ।
 samprāptānna purā na samprati na ca prāptau drḍhapratyayān
 vāñchāmātraparigrahānapi param tyaktum na śaktā vayam ॥ 13 ॥

(13) BRAHM-GYAAN-VIVEKA-NIRMAL-DHIYAHA KURVANTYAH0 DUSHKARAM
 YANMUNCHANTYUPA-BHOGAMAANJYAPI DHANAA-NYE-KAANTATO NIHASRPIHAHA
 /
 SAMPRAA-PTAANNA PURAA NA SAMPRATI NA CHA PRAAPTAU
 DRIHA-PRATYA-YAAN
 VAANCHHAA-MAATRA-PARIGRAHAANAPI PARAM TYAKTUM NA
 SHAKTAA VAYAM //

(13) [On true wisdom.] Those persons who are wise and enlightened about the truth, who know the difference between what is really true and what is pseudo truth, those who have a clear understanding and an equally clear conscious, can achieve very difficult objectives and do very tough tasks in life. They easily and effortlessly succeed in abandoning the faults and delusions associated with this world, such as worldly attachments, enjoyment of sensual pleasures and self gratification, as well as the allurements of material wealth and prosperity—though they know that they can enjoy them if they so want. They have dispassion and remain detached from such things. [This is because they realise that ultimately they will come to sorrow and feel completely exhausted and worn out if they indulge themselves in these worldly pursuits.]

On the contrary, there are people (who lack proper Gyan) who cannot give up the desire to pursue the sensual pleasures and material things of this world that could not be achieved or obtained by them in the past, or even in the present, and their achievement even in the future is most doubtful.

[The magical temptations of the world and its fascinating charms are so overwhelming that they dull the intellect of a person to such an extent that he does not realise that no matter how hard he had tried in the past and is trying in the present, he did not succeed in obtaining a trace of abiding happiness and peace and comfort he had expected from his strenuous efforts. He has not learnt a bit from his experiences, how unfortunate it is! He is so stupid that he expects to find this happiness, peace and comfort in some unknown time in the future. Though he has had first hand knowledge of the futility of pursuing this world in search of real bliss and true happiness in life, he still continues to run behind the world like a deluded man who is overshadowed by death would run behind a mirage in hot desert in search of the illusive water. Doesn't he realise from his past experience that he had been running behind so many illusions

of water in the desert but to no avail; hasn't he read about it in books that it is inviting sure death by falling into this trap? But he still does it.

Likewise, a foolish man knows that this world won't ever give him peace, happiness and comfort, but he still runs behind it.

Self-realised and wise persons accomplish even the most difficult of things. So, without even a semblance of pain and awareness, without feeling any sense of compulsion or deprivation, they easily relinquish worldly pleasures on a voluntarily basis though they know pretty well that they can be enjoy then if they so wished.

The irony is that we are unable to forego the desire to enjoy sensual pleasures and continue to yearn for them and spend our lifetimes pursuing them inspite of the fact that they are all imaginary—because we have not experienced them any time in the past, we are not enjoying them in the present, and there is no hope of ever enjoying them in the future. But we still long for them; we still hanker after them.]

धन्यानां गिरिकन्दरेषु वसतां ज्योतिः परं ध्यायतां
आनन्दाश्रुकणान्पिबन्ति शकुना निःशङ्कमङ्केशया ।
अस्माकं तु मनोरथोपरचितप्रासादवापीतट -
क्रीडाकाननकेलिकौतुकजुषामायुः परं क्षीयते ॥ १४॥

(14) dhanyānāṃ girikandarēṣu vasatām jyōtiḥ param dhyāyatām
ānandāśrukaṇānpibanti śakunā niḥśaṅkamaṅkēśayā ।
asmākaṃ tu manōrathōparacitaprāsādavāpītaṭa -
krīḍākānanakēlikautukajuṣāmāyuh param kṣīyatē ॥ 14॥

(14) DHANYAA-NAAM GIRIKANDARESHU VASATAAM JYOTIHI
PARAM DHYAA-YATAAM
AANANDAA-SRUKNAANPIBANTI SHAKUNAA NIHASHANKA-MANKE-SHYAHAA /
ASMAAKAM TU MANORATHO-PARCHITA-PRAASAADAVAA-PITATA -
KRIDAA KANANKELI-KAUTUK-JUSHAAMAAYUHA PARAM KSHEEYATE /

(14) [On the bliss obtained by self-realised ascetics.] To speak the truth, those exalted sages who live in mountain caves and are deeply engrossed in meditating upon Brahm, the Supreme Consciousness and the cosmic Self which lives in the form of their own 'self', are really blessed and their births are praiseworthy, for they are the ones who have lived a meaningful life and have experienced true blessedness, who have true and abiding bliss and beatitude, who have seen the Truth in the illumination of Brahm. This makes them so ecstatic with joy that streams of joyful tears roll down their eyes.

Birds come and sit on their laps fearlessly even as they sip this nectar of bliss dropping down from the eyes of such blessed sages.

[These meditating sages and ascetics are completely oblivious of their physical surroundings because they are enjoy extreme bliss experienced by a person when he has reached a transcendental state of consciousness so much so that that don't even know that birds are perched on their bodies. The birds are fearless from any harm coming from such sages because these meditating sages are sitting motionless like a

statue of stone as they are lost in meditation. The tear of joy and ecstasy rolling down their eyes are like spray of sweet water falling down from some high mountain spring in which birds come to bathe and drink.]

Compared to these fortunate sages, our own lives are frittering away and our time and energy ebbing away in pursuing artificial pleasures and comforts as we sit in pleasure gardens in palatial mansions, enjoying fountains and refreshing pools. We think that we are happy, but will we get the sort of sublime happiness enjoyed by these sages and ascetics that even birds like to come from far and wide to enjoy their company and share the bliss that drips from their eyes in the form of tears of ecstasy?

In all sooth, the sense of joy and happiness we think we are getting in this gross world of sense objects are illusionary and imaginary. The real joy is experienced by the sages who live on mountains and caves, meditating upon Brahm (as described above).

[So therefore, aren't we wasting away our time in pursuing false joy and fake happiness? Don't we understand that our time and life are passing away, and we get nothing sustainable in the form of peace and happiness?

In this verse, the poet envies the fortunate wise ascetics who live in mountain caves and contemplate on the supreme Consciousness known as Brahm. This Brahm is an eternal fount of bliss and beatitude. This makes these ascetics enjoy such immense amount of joy that tears of happiness roll down their cheeks. Birds fearlessly sit on their laps and drink these drops of tears which have become sweet due to the ecstasy these ascetics enjoy. The poet laments about his own misfortune arising out of ceaseless thoughts of enjoying the comfort and pleasures of this gross material world symbolised by the gardens and mansions of desires built in our minds.

We dig imaginary wells, lakes and build gardens around the mansions of desires, and then we engage ourselves in a fruitless frolicking around these creations. The whole span of life is lost in the process, and when old age comes we find that true peace and happiness, true comfort and pleasure, has still evaded us.]

भिक्षाशनं तदपि नीरसमेकवारं
शय्या च भूः परिजनो निजदेहमात्रम् ।
वस्त्रं विशीर्णं शतखण्डमयी च कन्था
हा हा तथापि विषया न परित्यजन्ति ॥ १५॥

(15) bhikṣāśanam tadapi nīrasamēkavāraṁ
śayyā ca bhūḥ parijanō nijadēhamātram ।
vastram viśīrṇa śatakhaṇḍamayī ca kanthā
hā hā tathāpi viṣayā na parityajanti ॥ 15॥

(15) BHIKSHAA-SHANAM TADAPI NEERAS-MEKAVAARAM
SHAYYAA CHA BHUHU PARIJANO NIJADEHA-MAATRAM /
VASTRAM VISHEERNA SHATKHANDA-MAYEE CHA KANTHAA
HAA HAA TATHAAPI VISHAYAA NA PARITYA-JANTI //

(15) [On the sticky nature of desires for sensual pleasures.] I have tried to practice austerity and strict self-restraint over my sense organs and their desire to seek gratification by following these steps: I accept only those things that I get by begging to feed my stomach; I eat these things even if they have no taste, and that also only once a day. I use the earth for bed (i.e. I sleep on hard ground), and my only attendant is my own body (i.e. I do everything myself). I cover my body with a tattered and roughly sewn blanket that has a hundred stitches on it to patch its holes (instead of wearing at least reasonably proper clothes).

But alas! In spite of my best effort and stern vows that I practice, the 'Vishayas' (longing, attraction and attachment for sensual pleasures and objects that provide them) that are present in me do not abate.

[To wit, my meals are only those things that I get as alms, and they are tasteless as well. I eat such bland food only once a day. I have nothing but the ground to sleep on. My body is alike a servant; I have no other help. I have only one piece of cloth to cover myself with, and that too is in tatters and stitched at different places. Even after all this, sensual pleasure plagues me constantly. It is such a pity that even if I resolve to desist from all natural comforts and subject myself to virtual torture, the desires and longings inherent in me do not leave me in peace. How despicable and sorry is this state of affairs indeed.

The poet laments about his lack of true renunciation. He has all the external signs of one who has renounced the world, one who practices exemplary self-restraint and austerities. His food is only by begging, and this food too is bland and tasteless. He eats once a day. He sleeps on bare earth. He has no company. Rags are his garments. But in spite of adopting all the habits and external signs of a hermit, the longing for fulfilment of desires and yearning for sense objects of the material world have not abandoned him.]

स्तनौ मांसग्रन्थी कनककलशावित्युपमितौ
मुखं श्लेष्मागारं तदपि च शशाङ्केन तुलितम् ।
स्रवन्मूत्रक्लीन्नं करिवरशिरस्पर्धि जघनं
मुहुर्निन्द्यं रूपं कविजनविशेषैर्गुरु कृतम् ॥ १६॥

(16) stanau māmsagranthī kanakakalaśāvityupamitau
mukhaṁ ślēṣmāgāraṁ tadapi ca śaśāṅkēna tulitam ।
sravanmūtraklīnnaṁ karivaraśirasparldhi jaghanam
muhurnindyam rūpaṁ kavijanaviśēṣairguru kṛtam ॥ 16॥

(16) STANAU MANSAGRANTHI KANAKA-KALA-SHAAVITU-PAMITAU
MUKHAM SHLESMAA-GAARAM TADAPI CHA SHASHAANKENA TULITAM /
SRAVANMUTRKLLENNAM KARIVARASHIRA-SPARDHI JAGHANAM
MUHURNINDYAM RUPAM KAVIJANA-VISHESHAIR-GURU KRITAM //

(16) [There is nothing attractive in a female body that lures a man.] A woman's breasts are nothing but lumps of flesh though they appeal to a man's desires as if they were duel golden pitchers (or pots full of gold which a lustful man grabs greedily).

Her face (or mouth with its lips) looks so charming that one compares it to the glamorous full moon which is regarded as a heavenly pitcher of nectar in its best sweetness though the mouth is a stinking hole full of mucous and saliva.

Her thighs are compared to the broad forehead of a mature elephant in spite of their nearness to an aperture in the body from where filthy urine and stool are passed. [The forehead is the best and the most respected place in a person's body, while the thigh is the seat of the anus and the urethra. A lustful, passionate and lascivious man gives a woman's thighs the same respect and importance that a self-restrained, righteous and wise man would give to the forehead.]

Verily indeed, this form of a woman that deserves outright contempt is honoured and praised by poets (or lustful men who are so deluded by their overwhelming passions that they do not see the truth).

[This verse criticises the ways of the poets who describe women with eloquent similes. Breasts contain flesh. Poets exaggerate them as gold pots. Face is a storehouse of phlegm. Poets compare faces of women to the moon which is cool and sweet like a pitcher of nectar. The uterus-vulva contain urine and the rectum-anus has stool, but the poets compare the thighs that stand as guards on two sides of these filthy openings to the head of an elephant—broad and attractive. Thus all the organs of a female body are unclean and do not invite praise, but poets add grandeur to them by praising them no end.]

एको रागिषु राजते प्रियतमादेहार्धहारी हरो
नीरागेषु जनो विमुक्तललनासङ्गो न यस्मात्परः ।
दुर्वारस्मरबाणपन्नगविषव्याविद्धमुग्धो जनः
शेषः कामविडम्बितान्न विषयान्भोक्तुं न मोक्तुं क्षमः ॥ १७॥

(17) ēkō rāgiṣu rājatē priyatamādēhārdhahārī harō
nīrāgēṣu janō vimuktalalanāsaṅgō na yasmātparaḥ ।
durvārasmarabāṇapannagaviṣavyāviddhamugdhō janah
śēṣaḥ kāmaviḍambitānna viṣayānbhōktum na mōktum kṣamaḥ ॥ 17॥

(17) EKO RAAGISHU RAAJATE PRIYATAMAA-DEHAA-RDHA-HAAREE HARO
NEERAAGESHU JANANO VIMUKTA-LALANAA-SANGO NA YASMAATPARAHA /
DURVAARA-SMAR-BAANA-PANNAGA-VISHAVYAA-VIDDHA-MUGDHO JANAHA
SHESHAHA KAAM-VIDIMBI-TAANNA VISHYAANBHOKTUM NA MOKTUM KSHAMAM //

(17) [The uniqueness of Lord Shiva in which he is depicted in two forms, one form known as 'Ardha-Naarishwar' in which one half is a male and the other half is a female, and the second form that shows Shiva in a meditative posture and enjoying supreme blissfulness. This dual form is used in this verse to describe how the same world is viewed by two different persons with different attitudes—one who is indulgent in the world and engrossed in enjoying its sensual objects, and the other who has renounced the pleasures of the gross world, is dispassionate and detached from it, and enjoys the bliss that comes with self-realisation.]

Lord Shiva (“Hara”) presents a mysterious and a strange sight that symbolises the paradoxes of creation. On the one hand he appears in a form that is half male and half female as if he is inseparable from his partner, sharing a close relationship with her so much so that they are always in touch with each other. This form of the Lord appeals to those who are sensual and lustful.

The other is the meditating form of Lord Shiva who is deeply engrossed in the thoughts of his supreme Self, the Atma which is pure consciousness; it’s a posture that gives immense bliss and ecstasy to the Lord. This latter form appeals to the ascetics and sages who are dispassionate and have renounced the attractions of the world.

But the rest of the creatures of the world can never attain the exalted state of enlightenment obtained by Lord Shiva because the Lord can at once be in so close a contact with his beloved wife (named Gauri or Parvati) but still remain indifferent to the corresponding sensual pleasure by remaining submerged in meditation and deep contemplation upon the ‘Self’ which gives him extreme ecstasy. The ordinary people in the world would either be engrossed in enjoying the sensual pleasures when they are smitten by cupid, which makes them yearn for the company of women, or they would renounce it altogether and lead a life away from them. But none can say that they can practice these two divergent ways of life simultaneously like Lord Shiva.]

[To wit, Lord Shiva, who is the patron deity of ascetics, is regarded as the most enlightened of the Gods. This is why he has been honoured by the epithet ‘Maha-Deva’—i.e. the ‘Great God’. He has so intense self-control over his urges and sense organs that in spite of being in constant touch with his consort, as is depicted in his form of ‘half male and half female’, a form known as “Ardha-Naarishwar”, he still remains aloof from passions and lust. In fact, he is regarded venerably as the God who destroyed Kaam-deva, the personified form of cupid and the patron god of passions, lust and longing.

There is another interpretation of this verse. Just as the same Lord Shiva is seen in different ways by people of different mentality—one category of people who see him as being conjoined or locked in embrace to a female and the other category who see him as an ascetic who is perpetually in a trance-like state of Samadhi obtained during the higher stages of meditation—the woman and the world and their respective charms too mean different things to different people. A passionate man would see the world as being a source of perpetual sensual enjoyment, but a wise and enlightened man sees no attraction in it as it sees the world as something gross and perishable, and so he would rather derive happiness in self-restraint and focusing on his spiritual pursuits.

If there is a true lover and a passionate person who can’t live a moment without his beloved then surely it is Lord Shiva as he is permanently conjoined with his consort Parvati. This form of Lord Shiva represents a man who is extremely passionate and lustful.

The second half of Shiva in which he is always involved in meditation and submerged in the bliss that comes with contemplation upon the ‘Self’, the pure conscious Atma represents a person who is a true renunciate, one who is truly dispassionate and detached from all sensual pleasures of the gross world. This is truly and honestly remarkable because Shiva manages to remain perpetually in a state of Samadhi (which is a trance-like of transcendental existence) and derive extreme spiritual bliss from it in spite of being so close with a female partner whom the Lord never lets go out of his touch.

In all sooth it is this reason why Lord Shiva has been able to conquer Kaamdeo/cupid, the patron god of lust and passion, by reducing him to ashes, something even the greatest of sages, seers, hermits and ascetics could not do.

This form of Shiva shows how one can live in this gross world and enjoy its pleasures and comforts on the outside while remaining totally dispassionate and detached from it in the inside.

To wit, life can be lead in an ordinary way and with great happiness in this world if one knows the trick of how to do it. It is not at all necessary to leave the world in order to enjoy the bliss of self-realisation and meditation if one emulates the example of Lord Shiva. Forsooth, a truly enlightened man can live surrounded by the material comforts and pleasures of this world, yet he can be totally distanced from them.]

अजानन्दाहात्म्यं पततु शलभस्तीव्रदहने
स मीनोऽप्यज्ञानाद्वडिशयुतमश्नातु पिशितम् ।
विजानन्तोऽप्येते वयमिह विपज्जालजटिलान्
न मुञ्चामः कामानहह गहनो मोहमहिमा ॥ १८॥

(18) ajānandāhātmyam patatu śalabhastīvradahane
sa mīnō'pyajñānādvadiśayutamāśnātu piśitam ।
vijānantō'pyētē vayamiha vipajjālajaṭilān
na muñcāmaḥ kāmānahaha gahanō mōhamahimā ॥ 18॥

(18) AJAANANDAA-HAATMYAM PATATU SHALABHASTI-VRADAHANAY
SA MEENO-APYA-GYAANAA-DBADISHAYUTMASHNAATU PISHITAM /
VIJAANANTO-APYETE VAYAMIHA VIPA-JJALA-JATILAN
NA MUNCHAAMAHA KAAMAA-NAHAHA GAHANO MOHA-MAHIMAA //

(18) [How we are foolish to get trapped in the net of desires despite our intellectual ability to discriminate between what is good for our spiritual well-being and what is not; what would give us true happiness and joy, and what would not.]

The moth inadvertently falls into the flame of a burning fire and burns to death. [This is because the moth is so mesmerised by the charm of the candle's flame that it cannot resist the temptation to go to embrace it, without realising that the light of the flame is actually beckoning it to its death. It is the moth's passion for the brilliant light of the flame that causes its death.]

Similarly, a fish gets trapped by the hook when it is tempted to go and bite at the piece of bait attached to it, and in this greed it loses its life. [The fish does not know or realise that the small piece of meat that is offered to it is no doing of charity by the fisherman, but it is a means to catch it to be cooked and eaten by him. It is the overwhelming greed for the flesh that kills the fish.]

But the great irony is that we, the human beings who are supposed to be blessed with the faculty of reasoning and intellect, who are expected to be wise and intelligent creatures who can analyse and understand, who can distinguish between

what is true and good for us and what is not, still allow ourselves, voluntarily and cheerfully, to become greedy for the things of this material world and go all out to achieve them, albeit we know that they are the cause of destruction and misery, that they give pain and torments instead of happiness and joy.

Indeed, it is such a sorry state of affairs that inspite of this knowledge, either by personal experience or by hearing from others and reading about it in the scriptures, we still get deluded as if we were like the ignorant insect, the moth, or the poor creature, the fish, for we hanker endlessly for sensual objects of the gross and perishable world with the expectation of deriving pleasures and comforts from them though they are all imaginary, transient, and without substance in them.

Verily, one is forced to be awed by the astounding power that ignorance and delusions wield upon all in this world.

[The poet laments at our delusions and an insatiable desire for sensual enjoyments that have eclipsed our mind and intellect to such an extent that despite our having the intellectual ability to discern what is good for us and what is not we still fall into the trap like moth that gets burnt in the flame of the candle or the fish that gets caught in the net by its greed for the bait.

The moth and the fish can be excused because they are low down in the evolutionary hierarchy; they do not have the mind, the intellect, the wisdom and the ability to analyse and judge what is good for them and what is not. But we humans are fortunate to have all knowledge and this ability; we can control our senses and their impulses, our actions and deeds, our thoughts and desires. But the power of delusions is so stupendous that it makes us fall in the trap of temptations arising from the material things of this world; from the sensual pleasures and physical comforts of the world.

Verily indeed, the moth falls in the fire because it is unaware of the combustive nature of the fire. The fish is attracted by the bait of food and gets trapped in the fisherman's net. On the other hand, we, the humans, know pretty well that pleasures are short-lived, and they leave in their wake interminable pain, misery and grief. Yet we are unable to abstain from them. It is difficult to gauge the depth and intensity of the power of Temptation.]

तृषा शुष्यत्यास्ये पिबति सलिलं शीतमधुरं
क्षुधार्तः शाल्यानं कवलयति मांसादिकलितम् ।
प्रदीप्ते कामाग्नौ सुदृढतरमालिङ्गति वधूं
प्रतीकारं व्याधेः सुखमिति विपर्यस्यति जनः ॥ १९॥

(19) trṣā śuṣyatyāsyē pibati salilam śītamadhuram
kṣudhārtaḥ śālyānam kavalayati māmsādikalitam ।
pradīptē kāmāgnau sudrḍhataramāliṅgati vadhūm
pratīkāraṁ vyādhēḥ sukhamiti viparyasyati janah ॥ 19॥

(19) TRISHAA SHUSHYA-TYAASYE PIBATI SALILAM SHEETA-MADURAM
KSHUDHAARTHA SHAA-LYAA-NAM KAVALAYATI MAANSAA-DIKALITAM /
PRADEEPTA KAAMAAGNAU SUDHIRTAR-MAALINGATI VADHOOM

PRATEE-KAARAM VYAADHEHA SUKHAMITI VIPARYA-SYATI JANAHA //

(19) [On true happiness.] When a creature is thirsty, he drinks delicious and fragrant liquids (such as sweet and scented water); when he is hungry, he satisfies his hunger with meat, rice and vegetable curries; when he is overcome with passions, he calms it down with firmly embracing his beloved (wife).

But such a person is indeed a stupid fool par excellence if he thinks that these temporary reprieves give him true happiness and abiding satisfaction.

[A thirsty person drinks cool and sweet water. A hungry person relishes sweet meat with food. A sexually aroused person embraces his wife passionately. These are just temporary means to alleviate immediate needs, but they do not provide any long-term relief. For instance, a cool drink would quench thirst for the time being, but it would return again. Food similarly would make a man filled but only for some time, as hunger returns once again to haunt him. The urge to satisfy one's sexual instincts are lulled only for a while, for they are aroused sooner than later.

None of these remedies give a permanent solution to the underlying problem—like thirst, hunger and sexual urges. So a person thinks, albeit erroneously, that drinking cool and sweet water, eating delicious food or having sex would quench his desire for these things. It is not so, for they keep on coming again and again. Similarly, longing for the world and the desire to enjoy its sense objects of pleasure and comfort never really end in spite of a man telling himself that if he has this or that he would stop wanting more. The real end of desires and yearnings, which however are known to be harbingers of endless sorrow and pain, comes when one develops true and sincere renunciation, when he has honest and voluntary dispassion arising from the inside of his heart. And this can only happen when he is convinced of the futility and the un-sustainability of expecting any sort of real happiness and true joy from anything pertaining to this gross world for the simple reason that all things that exist in a world that is transient and gross by its inherent nature cannot have any other character but that of its parent, i.e. transience, impermanence and grossness.

A wise and intelligent man beholds how pursuance of this world in the hope of finding happiness and peace in it leaves a man fretting and fuming endlessly in his tiring endeavour. On the other hand, an ascetic who has renounced all desires for things pertaining to this material world and spends his time in quietude finds lasting peace and bliss for himself. A wise person therefore realises the fugitive and relative nature of happiness and joy that he seems to derive from this material world.]

तुङ्गं वेश्म सुताः सतामभिमताः संख्यातिगाः सम्पदः
कल्याणी दयिता वयश्च नवमित्यज्ञानमूढो जनः ।
मत्वा विश्वमनश्चरं निविशते संसारकारागृहे
संदृश्य क्षणभंगुरं तदखिलं धन्यस्तु संन्यस्यति ॥ २०॥

(20) tuṅgaṁ vēśma sutāḥ satāmabhimatāḥ saṁkhyātīgāḥ sampadaḥ
kalyāṇī dayitā vayaśca navamityajñānamūḍhō janaḥ ।
matvā viśvamanaścharaṁ niviśatē saṁsāra-kārāgrhē
saṁdrśya kṣaṇabhaṁguraṁ tadakhilaṁ dhanyastu saṁnyasyati ॥ 20॥

(20) TUNGAM VASHMA SUTAAHA SATAAM-BHIMATAAHA SANKHYAA-TIGAAHA
SAMPADAHA
KALYAANI DAYITAA VAYASHCHA NAVAMITYA-GYAAN-MOODHO JANAHA /
MATVAA VISHWAMANA-SHWARAM NIVISHATE SAMSAAR-KAA-RAA-GRIHE
SAMDRISHYA KSHANA-BHANGURAM TADAKHILAM DHANYASTU SANYA-SYATI //

(20) Men who are deluded by ignorance believe that the tall mansions they possess, their sons who are given respect even by the learned, the untold wealth that they own, their beloved wife who is devoted to them and serve them diligently, the youthfulness that their handsome body has—all these things are permanent for them in this world.

Being thus deluded by this false charm, they run cheerfully into a virtual prison-like home of worldliness. On the other hand, those who are wise and enlightened, like the ascetics, know the truth of the whole matter; they know the transient and perishable nature of everything. So they voluntarily renounce false things and invest their time and energy in seeking the Truth by means of meditation and contemplation.

[For an ignorant man who is so deluded by the mirage that he sees in the symbolic barren desert of the world that he believes everything that he sees in it to be true and his very own. He believes that his wonderful home, his obedient children, his countless riches, his pretty wife, his young and youthful body—they are all his and would last him forever. So he voluntarily confines himself to the prison symbolised by his home, and befriends its members like they were his mates in the prison. He, in other words, regards a prison as his home.

On the other hand, those who are wise realise that just as a prison can never give true happiness and freedom to anyone, this worldly home too won't ever. And just like a prisoner who seeks the first opportunity to break free from the walls of the prison, these self-realised and wise persons seek freedom from this shackle of family ties and worldly relationships by renouncing them and developing dispassion and detachment towards them. Just like a prison cannot give real joy and comfort to a prisoner, a wise person never finds true happiness in this world and family ties.

So, wise people renounce the world and become ascetics. Such persons derive true happiness and joy in this life.]

दीना दीनमुखैः सदैव शिशुकैराकृष्टजीर्णाम्बरा
क्रोशद्भिः क्षुधितैर्निरन्नविधुरा दृष्या न चेद्गेहिनी ।
याञ्चाभङ्गभयेन गद्गदगलत्त्रुट्यदिवलीनाक्षरं
को देहीति वदेत्स्वदग्धजठरस्यार्थं मनस्वी पुमान् ॥ २१ ॥

(21) dīnā dīnamukhaiḥ sadaiva śīśukairākṛṣṭajīrṇāmbarā
krōśadbhiḥ kṣudhitairnirannavidhurā dr̥ṣyā na cēdgēhinī ।
yāñcābhaṅgabhayēna gadgadagalattruṭyadvilīnākṣaraṁ
kō dēhīti vadētsvadagdhajatharasārthē manasvī pumān ॥ 21 ॥

(21) DEENAA DEEN-MUKHAIHA SADAIVA SHISHUKAI-RAA-KRISHT-JEERNAA-
MBARAA

KROSHADBHIHA KSHUDHI-TAIRNIRANNA-VIDHURAA DRISHYAA NA CHEDGE-HINEE
/
YAANCHAA-BHANGA-BHAYEN GADGAD-GAL-TTRUTYA-DVI-LEENAA-KSHARAM
KO DEHEETI VADE-TSWADAGDHA-JATHARA-SYAARTHE MANASWEE PUMAAN //

(21) Say, why should a man with self respect beg? When he entreats for something, his voice is choked with the fear of failure to get what he seeks. He is overly worried about the chances of refusal of his request by the donor. He gets so nervous that his voice is husky and broken. Say, for what reason should a person stoop so low: to feed his stomach? Woes betide such a person.

Imagine, would any person, however self respecting he may be, ever be able to desist from begging for food in a faltering voice, made weak by his own hungry stomach, when he sees his starving wife with a sunken face, whose old and worn-out clothes are being tugged at by his hungry children with a piteous look in their eyes?

[Here, the poet points out the appalling state of affairs for a householder in this world that more often than not compels even a righteous and self-respecting man to do things much against his wishes, things he would not like to do under ordinary circumstances. This compulsion arises because he lives in a family and has so many obligations to fulfil. He may personally decide that it is preferable for him to die than to beg for food, but what can he do when he sees the pity and miserable condition of his hungry family, of his poor wife and crying children? He is forced to put aside his resolve and serve his rich masters so that he can feed his family. He may go hungry, but he is moved by pity when he sees the miserably woeful condition of his children and wife who depend upon him. He begins to feel the pang of guilt which is more severe than the pang of hunger that gnaws at his stomach.

He has to suffer doubly—one from his own hunger, and the other from the woeful condition of his dependants. In short, a householder is often left with no choice but to surrender his principles and sacrifice his self-respect at the altar of familial obligations and responsibilities.

By citing this instance, the poet wishes to highlight the fetters that tie a man while he is a householder, and this stands in sharp contrast to a man who has renounced the world, such as an ascetic. A person who has no worry about the family because he has renounced all his ties with it and has become an ascetic or monk or a friar will live very peacefully as he just needs enough to sustain himself. Even if what he gets to eat is not sufficient, he can overcome his desire for more food by practicing self-restraint. But this is impossible when he sees his young children wailing in hunger, and his wife with tears in her eyes. Even the hardest of hearts would melt.

In this verse, the benefits of renouncing worldly ties are brought to the fore. One is freed from so many responsibilities, encumbrances and worries if one breaks free from this fetter. He gets a chance to find peace and happiness in the remaining period of his life, for otherwise his entire life is spent in fulfilling his family responsibilities and obligations, and never ever does he get a chance to rest in peace.

It ought to be noted that the poet, Bhartrihari, has drawn a sharp contrast between two persons—one a householder and another who has renounced all his familial ties, such as an ascetic or a monk. In a situation where both of them beg, the ascetic or the monk begs with a cheerful heart and at his pleasure; he is under no compulsion whatever to do so. Further, he is welcomed in the house where he goes for begging, and in case he finds that he is not welcomed he may discard this door forever in his future rounds. An ascetic is not bound to any particular person or

master, and therefore he does not serve anyone, and is always free. An ascetic's life is one of peace and joy.

On the other hand, the householder has no such freedom. He must bring food for his family whatever may be the way; he is forced to go out to earn his livelihood and do a job even if it does not appeal to his heart; he has to serve masters and lords who treat him with disrespect as if the person is a sub-human; and rarely if ever does he gets a chance to rest peacefully.]

अभिमतमहामानग्रन्थिप्रभेदपटीयसीगुरुतरगुणग्रामाम्भोजस्फुतोज्ज्वलचन्द्रिका।

विपुलविलसल्लज्जावल्लीवितानकुठारिका

जठरपिठरी दुष्पूरेयं करोति विडम्बनम् ॥ २२॥

(22) abhimatamahāmānagranthiprabhēdapaṭīyasīgurutaragūṇagrāmām-bhōjasphutōjjvalacandrikā।

vipulavilasallajjāvallīvitānakuṭhārikā

jaṭharapiṭharī duṣpūrēyaṁ karōti viḍambanam ॥ 22॥

(22) ABHIMAT-MAHAAMAAN-GRANTHI-PRABHED-PTEEYASEE-GURU-TARA-GUNA-GRAAMAAMBHOJA-SPHUTO-JJVALA-CHANDRIKAA /

VIPUL-VIL-SALLA-JJVAA-LLEEVITAAN-KUTHAARIKA

JATHAR-PITHARI DUSHPOO-REYAM KAROTI VIDAMBANAM //

(22) The pit of our stomach is like a fathomless barrel that is indeed so difficult to fill, and in consequence it becomes the root cause of all our fallings and undoing. No matter how ingenious a person is, he is unlikely to undo its formidable knots. It forces us to sacrifice our self-respect and dignity. Like the moon which forces the lotus flower to close its petals though the former is so soothing for the rest of the world, this stomach compels even the most righteous of persons to alienate himself from all the estimable virtues he is known for. It is like an axe inasmuch as it hacks down the creeper symbolised by a conscientious person's self respect and honour so much so that he kneels down in abject surrender and stoop to a low level ordinarily not even thinkable for him. [Woe betides such a stomach!]

[As it will be obvious, this verse is an extension of the idea expressed in the previous verse no. 21, and it is further elaborated in the next verse no. 23 herein below.]

पुण्ये ग्रामे वने वा महति सितपटच्छन्नपालिं कपालिं

हयादाय न्यायगर्भद्विजहुतहुतभुग्धूमधूमोपकण्ठे ।

द्वारं द्वारं प्रविष्टो वरमुदरदरीपूरणाय क्षुधार्तो

मानी प्राणैः सनाथो न पुनरनुदिनं तुल्यकुल्येषु दीनः ॥ २३॥

(23) puṇyē grāmē vanē vā mahati sitapaṭacchannapāliṃ kapāliṃ
hyādāya nyāyagarbhadvijahutahutabhugdhūmadhūmrōpakaṇṭhē ।
dvāraṃ dvāraṃ praviṣṭō varamudaradarīpūraṇāya kṣudhārtō
mānī prāṇaiḥ sanāthō na punaranudinam tulyakulyēṣu dīnaḥ ॥ 23 ॥

(23) PUNYE GRAAME VANE VAA MAHATI SITAPTA-CCHHANNA-PAALIM KAPAALIM
HYAADAAYA NYAAYA-GARBHA-DVIJ-HUTAHUTA-BHUGDHOOMA-DHOOMRO-
PAKANTHE /
DWAARAM DWAARAM PRAVISHTHO VARMUDARDAREE-POORANAAYA
KSHUDHAARTO
MAANI PRAANAIHA SANAATHO NA PUNA-RANUDINAM TULYA-KULYESHU DEENAH
//

(23) [On the life of a Sanyasi.] It does not behove of a respectable person of self-esteem who has renounced all his attachments with the gross mortal world and all things related to it in order to maintain the dignity and high honour of his 'self' (i.e. his Atma; his soul) to accompany other ordinary beggars who roam from door to door like a petty vagrant beseechingly begging for morsels of food, and in the process sacrificing his self-respect and degrading or demoting the exalted stature of his 'self', the Atma.

In all sooth, a person who has true renunciation would beg only to find enough food to eat so that his Pran (the vital winds) could sustain life in his body. It is a ritual sanctioned for them by the scriptures (and it is meant to remind them of their simplicity and self-control over the senses).

Such a person who begs for food in a righteous manner and as a part of his way to lead a life of detachment and holiness should remember the following points while begging: (i) he should beg for food only when he feels hungry; (ii) he should approach only those households where the sacrificial fire is lit and offerings are made to it on a regular basis, or go away to the forested areas far from villages where such sacred fires are lit by resident hermits as would be evident from the grey smoke that hangs around the place; and (iii) while begging he should carry in his hands an earthen bowl whose mouth is covered by a clean white cloth (so that others do not see what is given to him for food; it also helps protect the food from dirt and infection spread by flies etc.).¹

[¹Alms should be taken and given anonymously. Otherwise it creates a sense of attachment and obligation; it creates a sense of shame in the Sanyasi while causing a sense of pride and a desire of recognition in the mind of the alms giver. Further, alms should be accepted from righteous people only, as corrupted food would also corrupt the mind of the eater.]

But in any case, he should not beg like ordinary petty beggars in the society who appear to be his peers; he should ensure that he is not treated as equal to these dishonourable beggars who have trampled the honour and respect of their 'self' just to feed their greedy stomach.

गङ्गातरङ्गकणशीकरशीतलानिविद्याधराध्युषितचारुशिलातलानि।

स्थानानि किं हिमवतः प्रलयं गतानि

यत्सावमानपरपिण्डरता मनुष्याः ॥ २४ ॥

(24) gaṅgātaraṅgakaṇaśīkaraśītalānividyaḍharādhyaṣitacāruśilātalāni |
sthānāni kiṁ himavataḥ pralayaṁ gatāni
yatsāvamānaparapiṇḍaratā manuṣyāḥ ॥ 24 ॥

(24) GANGAATARANGA-KANASHEEKAR-SHEETALAANI-VIDYAA-DHARAA-
DHYUSHITA-CHAARU-SHILAA-TALAANI /
STHAA-NAANI KIM HIMVATAHA PRALAYAM GATAANI
YATSAA-VAMAAN-PAR-PINDARATAA MANU-SHYAAHA //

(24) Are the magnificent realms of the lofty mountains of the Himalayas that are blessed with the virtue of solitude and peace, that are sprayed with the mist of dew drops from the sparkling waters of the holy river Ganges, and are inhabited by wise Spirits known as the ‘Vidyaadhars’¹, so useless and the cause of giving pain and grief that men would choose to ignore them and instead prefer to wallow in the lowly world that only brings disgrace to them?

[The poet laments that even those who have renounced the world and claim to have been enlightened about its falsehood and misery still choose to stick to this world and live amongst its inhabitants just so that they can get something to eat and get something of basic comfort from there, while ignoring the wonderful place in the mountains where Gods and exalted Spirits live, a place that can give them a heavenly environment where they can derive immense peace and bliss. Why do even the so-called renouncers and ascetics waste their time in this world and not go to enjoy the supreme sense of joy, bliss and blessedness that one can experience in abundance when surrounded by the captivating beauty of Nature in the Himalayas where exalted sages and hermits live to derive the best that life has to offer to any living being?]

[¹The ‘Vidyaadhars’ are superior Spirits who are said to be well-versed in different branches of art, such as music. Their name is derived from the word ‘Vidya’ meaning knowledge and skill. A person can think of music and song only when he is at peace with himself, and not when his mind is occupied with so many humdrum worries of the world. The presence of Vidyaadhars in the Himalayas indicates that those who live there are thoroughly enjoying their lives in peace with no trace of worldly worries to distract them. It also indicates to the ‘music played by Nature’ in the serene realm of the distant mountains in the way of the soft sound of cool breeze blowing all over the place, of the soothing sound of gurgling water rippling down the rivers and streams, of the merry sounds made by frolicking birds and animals, of the buzzing of bees and the humming of insects, and so on and so forth. All the noisy clutter of the plains are absent in the Himalayas. So it is an ideal place where one can derive immense joy and peace for himself and drink the nectar of bliss that one has sought to obtain when he had decided to leave his involvement with the humdrum affairs of worldly life.

The next verse no. 25 wonders why an ascetic would not prefer to live in the splendid Himalayas when they are endowed with all the essentials things needed for life, and that too in their pristine pure, natural and un-adulterated forms.]

किं कन्दाः कन्दरेभ्यः प्रलयमुपगता निर्झरा वा गिरिभ्यः
 प्रध्वस्ता वा तरुभ्यः सरसफलभृतो वल्कलिन्यश्च शाखाः ।
 वीक्ष्यन्ते यन्मुखानि प्रसभमपगतप्रश्रयाणां खलानां
 दुःखाप्तस्वल्पवित्तस्मयपवनवशान्नर्तितभूलतानि ॥ २५ ॥

(25) kim kandāḥ kandarēbhyaḥ pralayamupagatā nirjharā vā giribhyaḥ
 pradhvastā vā tarubhyaḥ sarasaphalabhṛtō valkalinyaśca śākhāḥ ।
 vīkṣyantē yanmukhāni prasabhamapagatapraśrayāṇāṁ khalānām
 duḥkhāptasvalpavittasmayapavanavaśānnartitabhrūlatāni ॥ 25 ॥

(25) KIM KANDAAHA KANDARE-BHYAHA PRALAYA-MUPAGATAA NIRJHARAA VAA
 GIRI-BHYAHA
 PRADVASTAA VAA TARU-BHYAHA SARAS-PHALBHRITO VALKALI-NYA-SHCHA
 SHAAKHAHA /
 VEE-KSHYANTE YANMUKHAANI PRASA-BHAMAPAGATA-PRASRA-YAANAAM KHA-LAA-
 NAAMAM
 DUKKHAAPTA-SWALPA-VITTA-SMAYA-PAWANVA-SHAANNARTITA-BHOOLA-TAANI //

(25) Have the edible roots, nourishing tubers and medicinal herbs vanished from the mountains and their verdant green forests (that an ascetic won't find something to eat to his contentment); have the fruit-laden trees (that provide succulent sweet fruits to ascetics) and the fibres given by them (that are used by ascetics as clothes) as well as the sweet water of the streams and waterfall (that ascetics drink) disappeared that those who live in the caves (i.e. the ascetics) would starve to death?

So then, why would those who have renounced the world prefer to exhaust and demean themselves and sacrifice their self-esteem by begging for morsels of food and the basic necessities of life, with a furrowed eyebrow and wrinkled forehead (as a sign of worry and consternation at the prospect of subjecting themselves to untold insult and humiliation, or to indicate if what they do is right for them or not), from house to house of haughty and wicked money-bags who have their eyebrows dancing in arrogance like a creeper does in a strong gust of wind (represented by their arrogance)?

[The poet laments for an ascetic who has left his family and renounced the world in search of freedom, peace and happiness, but instead of going to the serene environment of the mountains he would beg from worldly people and seek their favour even though it means humiliating himself and demoting his Atma to an unpardonable level. Say, if this is what he wished to do, i.e. beg for food to fill his hungry stomach and acquire the necessities of life to live comfortably, then why did he not lead an honourable life as a householder who does some honourable work and earns his livelihood in a dignified way?]

पुण्यैर्मूलफलैस्तथा प्रणयिनीं वृत्तिं कुरुष्वधुना
 भूशय्यां नवपल्लवैरकृपणैरुत्तिष्ठ यावो वनम् ।
 क्षुद्राणामविवेकमूढ मनसां यत्रेश्वराणां सदा

वित्तव्याधिविकारविह्वलगिरां नामापि न श्रूयते ॥ २६ ॥

(26) puṇyairmūlaphalaistathā praṇayinīm vṛttim kuruṣvādhunā
bhūśayyām navapallavairakṛpaṇairuttiṣṭha yāvō vanam ।
kṣudrāṇāmavivēkamūḍha manasām yatrēśvarāṇām sadā
vittavyādhivikāravivhalagirām nāmāpi na śrūyatē ॥ 26 ॥

(26) PUNYAI-RMOOLA-PHALAI-STATHAA PRANAYINIM VRITTIM KURU-SHVAA-DHUNAA
BHOOSHAYYAAM NAVAPALLA-VAIRA-KRIPANAI-RUTTISHTHA YAAVO VANAM /
KSHUDRAANAAMA-VIVEKA-MOODHA MANASAAM YATRE-SHVA-RAANAAM SADAA
VITTAVYAA-DHI-VIKAAR-VIVVHALA-GIRAAM NAA-MAAPI NA SRUYATE //

(26) [The poet now calls upon the ascetic, who has paid attention to the advice given in the previous verses and has realised his mistake of begging from worldly masters and remaining in the same gross world which he claims to have renounced, to rise up and accompany him to the forest and the mountains. The wise poet exhorts the other ascetic as follows—] ‘Come on, get up and accompany me to the wonderful forest where abundant fruits and roots are available as a honourable means of feeding ourselves, where there is the earth upon which we can make a soft bed of leaves and twigs, where all means of enjoyable life free from worries are abundantly available, and where we won’t even hear the name of these despicable worldly people whose speech is stupefied by the arrogance of wealth, whose intellect has been dulled by indiscretion, and whose mind is deluded by ignorance.’

[In the next verse no. 27 the poet wonders why a man who can thoroughly enjoy happiness and peace in the forest would choose to live in the world and beg from wicked people. In other words, he tries to persuade the reluctant ascetic who is still in two minds as to whether or not he should go to the forest.]

फलं स्वेच्छालभ्यं प्रतिवनमखेदं क्षितिरुहां
पयः स्थाने स्थाने शिशिरमधुरं पुण्यसरिताम् ।
मृदुस्पर्शा शय्या सुललितलतापल्लवमयी
सहन्ते सन्तापं तदपि धनिनां द्वारि कृपणाः ॥ २७ ॥

(27) phalaṁ svēcchālabhyaṁ prativanamakhēdaṁ kṣitiruhāṁ
payah sthānē sthānē śīśiramadhuraṁ puṇyasaritām ।
mr̥dusparśā śayyā sulalitalatāpallavamayī
sahantē santāpaṁ tadapi dhaninām dvāri kṛpaṇāḥ ॥ 27 ॥

(27) FALAM SWECCHHAA-LABHYAM PRATI-VANA-MAKHEDAM KSHITIRUHAAM
PAYAHA STHAANE STHAANE SHISHIR-MADHURAM PUNYA-SARITAAM /
MRIDU-SPARSHAA SHAYYAA SULALI-TALA-TAAPALLA-VAMAYEE
SAHANTE SANTAAPAM TADAPI DHANI-NAAM DWAARI KRIPANAHA //

(27) ‘We can easily get sweet and succulent fruits from trees in every forest; we can get cool and refreshing water to drink from the many streams and rivers flowing there; we can have a comfortably soft bed made from green twigs and tender leaves to sleep upon. Why then should we seek help from the arrogant and miserly rich people who treat us as if we are greedy leeches, destitute vagrants and misfits of the society who are so unworthy and impotent that we could not even feed and fend for ourselves?’

[To wit, when the Lord God has been so large-hearted and beneficent that he has opened the whole vista of beautiful and bountiful Nature for us to enjoy till our hearts are full of it, say why do we still subject ourselves to humiliation and abject penury of the spirit by begging from rich masters and lords who would scorn at those who come to seek aid of any sort from them, who look disdainfully upon alms seekers as wicked and wretched creatures who deserve outright contempt? Even if they do give the seeker something it is only to shoo them away, all the while cursing them under their breath. Why do we force such untold insult and humiliation upon us? Woe to us if we do so!]

ये वर्तन्ते धनपतिपुरः प्रार्थनादुःखभाजो
 ये चाल्पत्वं दधति विषयाक्षेपपर्याप्तबुद्धेः ।
 तेषामन्तःस्फुरितहसितं वासराणि स्मरेयं
 ध्यानच्छेदे शिखरिकुहरग्रावशय्यानिषण्णः ॥ २८ ॥

(28) yē vartantē dhanapatipuraḥ prārthanāduḥkhabhājō
 yē cālpatvaṁ dadhati viṣayākṣēpaparyāptabuddhēḥ ।
 tēṣāmantaḥsphuritahasitaṁ vāsarāṇi smarēyaṁ
 dhyānacchēdē śikharikuharagrāvaśayyāniṣaṇṇaḥ ॥ 28 ॥

(28) YE VARTANTE DHANPATI-PURAH PRAARTHANAA-DUKKHA-BHAAJO
 YE CHAALPATWAM DADHATI VISHAYAA-KSHEPA-PARYAAPTA-BUDDHEHA /
 TESHAA-MANTAH-SPHURITA-HASITAM VAASARAANI SMAREYAM
 DHYAANA-CHEDE SHIKHARIKU HAR-GRAAVA-SHAYYAA-NISHANNAHA //

(28) While living enjoyably in the forest and sitting comfortably on a bed of stone in a cave, an ascetic recalls the days when he used to go begging at the doors of the arrogant rich, seeking alms from those who had stooped to low moral level and had become indulgent in sensual pleasures!

The ascetic laughs at himself as he wonders what a stupid fellow he had been then that he had allowed his exalted self to be supplicant to the mean and the lowly.

ये सन्तोषनिरन्तरप्रमुदितस्तेषां न भिन्ना मुदो
 ये त्वन्ये धनलुब्धसंकुलधियस्तेषां न तृष्णा हता ।
 इत्थं कस्य कृते कृतः स विधिना कीदृक्पदं सम्पदां

स्वात्मन्येव समाप्तहेममहिमा मेरुर्न मे रोचते ॥ २९॥

(29) yē santōṣanirantarapramuditastēṣāṁ na bhinnā mudō
yē tvanyē dhanalubdhasaṁkuladhiyastēṣāṁ na trṣṇā hatā ।
ittham kasya kṛtē kṛtaḥ sa vidhinā kīdrīkpadam sampadām
svātmanyēva samāptahēmamahimā mēurna mē rōcatē ॥ 29॥

(29) YE SANTOSH-NIRANTAR-PRAMUDITA-STESHAAM NA BHINNAA MUDE
YE TWANYE DHANLUBDHA-SANKULDHIYA-STESHAAM NA TRISHNAA HATAA /
ETTHAM KASYA KRITE KRITHA SA VIDHINAA KEEDRIIKPADAM SAMPADAAM
SWAATMANYEVA SAMAPTA-HEM-MAHIM MERURNA ME ROCHATE //

(29) Those (ascetics) who meditate upon the ‘self’, the pure Consciousness, are eternally contented as they derive immense bliss and beatitude in it. Their sense of happiness and joy is never disturbed or interrupted.

On the other hand, the craving, the greed and the yearning of those of low intellect and wisdom, those who are indulgent in the gross world of delusions and are confounded by it, never feel satisfied and their desires go on increasing no matter what they have.

In this situation, why did the Creator create the golden mountain known as Meru? The reason is that the ascetic has no use for it, and the worldly man can never be satisfied by its golden treasure. So no purpose is served either way for taking so much trouble in crafting this huge mountain of gold!

[The poet says that if one’s greed cannot be satisfied if one were given a huge mountain of gold, then what is the use of begging at the door of rich people to seek their favour when they themselves are always in want? Why not instead become an ascetic who can meditate peacefully and enjoy the bliss of the Atma on a perpetual basis, feeling happy and contented forever?

An ascetic never has greed for wealth, and the worldly people are never satisfied of it even if they have the mountain of gold for themselves.]

भिक्षाहारमदन्यमप्रतिसुखं भीतिच्छिदं सर्वतो
दुर्मात्सर्यमदाभिमानमथनं दुःखौघविध्वंसनम् ।
सर्वत्रान्वहमप्रयत्नसुलभं साधुप्रियं पावनं
शम्भोः सत्रमवार्यमक्षयनिधिं शंसन्ति योगीश्वराः ॥ ३०॥

(30) bhikṣāhāramadainyamapratīśukham bhīticchidam sarvatō
durmātsaryamadābhimānamathanam duḥkhaughavidhvamsanam ।
sarvatrānvahamaprayatnasulabham sādhipriyam pāvanam
śambhōḥ satramavāryamakṣayanidhiṁ śaṁsanti yōgīśvarāḥ ॥ 30॥

(30) BHIKSHAA-HAAR-MADAINYA-MAPRATI-SUKHAM BHEE-TI-CHHIDAM SARVATO
DURMAATSARYA-MADAABHIMAANA-MATHANAM DUKKHOGHA-VIDDHVANSANAM /
SARVATRAANVAHAM-PRAYATNA-SULABHAM SAADHU-PRIYAM PAA-WANAM

SHAMBHOHA SATRAMA-VAARYA-MAKSHAYA-NIDHIM SHAM-SANTI YOGEE-SHWA-
RAAHA //

(30) [In this verse, the poet Bhartrihari outlines the merits of obtaining food by begging for an ascetic, a hermit, a mendicant or a monk. It answers the question that if one renounces all forms of ties with one's family, and if begging for food is a demeaning act for the self-respect of the 'self', then how would a person who has nothing left with him feed himself? It is prescribed in all the Upanishads that deal with the spiritual theme of Sanyas that the best way for a person who has taken a vow of renunciation is to beg for food. So what are its merits vis-à-vis a Sanyasi who is a person who practices renunciation of the highest order?]

For a person who has renounced the world in the true sense, who has developed dispassion and detachment borne out of wisdom and realisation of the truth about the 'self' which is eternal and pure consciousness and distinct from the gross external world that is perishable (i.e. a person who does not pretend to renounce the world externally while hankering for it from within his heart and mind)—for such a wise, enlightened, self-realised, holy and pious person, begging for food is sanctioned by the scriptures as it is done by him to sustain the Pran (vital winds) present in his body (and not to appease his taste buds or demands of the stomach).

This food obtained by begging by a mendicant has the following merits to it:

- (i) It is obtained voluntarily and at pleasure, not by stooping low and sacrificing one's self respect and dignity;
- (ii) It is not obtained under any duress or to fulfil any worldly obligations;
- (iii) It gives great comfort to the seeker as he does it voluntarily and at his own pleasure, and also because he begs for food only when he is greatly hungry, and so the food is relished and enjoyed thoroughly by him;
- (iv) It frees him from all fears and botheration of depleted food stock and the lack of wherewithal to cook food (like the way a householder is worried about);
- (v) Since the donor of food is doing an act of charity by giving food to an ascetic, the latter is warmly welcomed by him and shown due respect (instead of being humiliated and scorned at);
- (vi) It helps the ascetic overcome his false sense of pride, vanity and ego (because once he dons the garb of a 'beggar' he automatically trounces his ego and pride, and therefore it's a sort of purification ritual for a mendicant) as well as his impatient nature (because he has to wait patiently till the householder brings food for him, often times a long wait because the food is still not ready to be served);
- (vii) Such food is always available daily, freely, easily, and without cost and obligations;
- (viii) It is an in-exhaustible supply of food as it represents a gesture of benevolence of Lord Shiva, a sort of a symbolic open kitchen of the supreme Lord God of creation, who has established this system to feed his subjects with no questions asked; it's a gracious gift from the Lord that never ends and is available freely to one and all.

[Therefore, an ascetic feels no sense of guilt or insult of the 'self' when seeking food by begging. It's like accepting alms from Lord Shiva himself. So it becomes a blessed food; it becomes a sanctified food. The mendicant is not violating his vow of practicing self control over his sense organs because he is not eating to appease himself or gratify any of his sense organs, such as his tongue that is pleased by tasty food, his nose that enjoys the aroma of food, his eyes that feasts of the form and

colour of food, or his stomach that wants its self stuffed with delicious food, but to sustain his Pran, his vital wind forces that actively support his Atma, his pure self, to help complete its journey through life as is destined for it by the Lord God.

The ascetic eats limited food with the enlightened view and a divine thought that it is like an offering made to the sacred fire of life burning inside his body, it is an offering made to the different Gods who symbolically reside in his body—just like one makes offering to the sacred fire and to the Gods while doing an external ‘fire sacrifice’ called a Yagya/Yajna.

It is to be noted that ascetics are advised to live in the forests and mountain caves as mentioned in previous verses, and obviously no food can be had by begging at such places because the ascetic would sustain himself on edible roots, leaves, stems, herbs and fruits. So this verse applies to the case when the mendicant passes through any village or inhabited areas during his wanderings.

Further, he accepts food in a small bowl, which means he won’t hoard it. Ascetics of the highest order do not carry even a begging-bowl for they cup their two palms and eat whatever is given to them right there. This pleases the donor exceedingly and makes him feel that he has done an auspicious deed that day.

He is expected to be constantly on the move, thereby ensuring that he does not approach any given household more than twice. His attire, demeanours and general bearing are pious, holy and auspicious; he keeps on chanting the holy name of the Lord God, chiefly of Lord Shiva, and so he is regarded as a personified form of the Lord wherever he goes, and this means that he is welcomed, revered and shown due respect unlike ordinary beggars and alms seekers who are disdainfully scorned at. The exalted mendicant is not like ordinary beggars who beg like a pauper and a sucker, and then hoard their collection even if it rots, who would stoop to any low to get something out from the householder, and cursing the latter if he fails to give the beggar something. The mendicant blesses instead of cursing even those who do not give him anything.]

भोगे रोगभयं कुले च्युतिभयं वित्ते नृपालाद्भयं
माने दैन्यभयं बले रिपुभयं रूपे जराया भयम् ।
शास्त्रे वादिभयं गुणे खलभयं काये कृतान्ताद्भयं
सर्वं वस्तु भयान्वितं भुवि नृणां वैराग्यमेवाभयम् ॥ ३१ ॥

(31) bhōgē rōgabhayam kulē cyutibhayam vittē nrpālādbhayam
mānē dainyabhayam balē ripubhayam rūpē jarāyā bhayam ।
śāstrē vādibhayam guṇē khalabhayam kāyē kṛtāntādbhayam
sarvaṁ vastu bhayānvitam bhuvi nrṇām vairāgyamēvābhayam ॥ 31॥

(31) BHOGE ROGABHYAM KULE CHYUTI-BHAYAM VITTE NRIPAALAA-DBHAYAM
MAANEY DAINYA-BHAYAM BALE RIPUBHAYAM RUPE JARAAYAA BHAYAM /
SHAASTRE VAADI-BHAYAM GUNE KHALABHAYAM KAAYE KRITAANTAA-DBHAYAM
SARVAM VASTU BHYAANVITAM BHUVI NRINAAM VAIRAAGYA-MEVAA-BHAYAM //

(31) [In this verse, the poet stresses that life in this world is full of fears and cares of different kinds and degrees. The only fearless and carefree form of life is when one renounces all his attachments with the world, because then the root cause of all fears and cares itself is eliminated.]

When one finds pleasure and comfort in enjoying the sensual pleasures of the world, he is constantly worried about and tormented by different diseases that afflict his body and restrict his ability to enjoy them. [Here, the word 'disease' may also mean the various problems that arise due to indulgences in the material world, such as pain of separation and losing what one manages to acquire; not being able to get what one desires which causes heartburn and grief; constant worry to safeguard one's acquisitions; guarding against jealous neighbours and competitors, and so on and so forth.]

A person is always worried about losing the social position that he occupies in this world, as well as the respect begotten by him due to his higher caste and birth. [He is sore affright that any wrong action taken or misdeed done on his part, however inadvertently, may make him lose the respect he's enjoying in social hierarchy as well as the pride of his high caste and birth. At the family level he may fear estrangement from his son and wife, neglect from his kith and kin, and even outright rejection and expulsion from the family.]

He is constantly worried about his wealth from the fear of kings and thieves. [The king may seize all his property at his whim; the thief may make him a pauper the next morning.]

Similarly, honour and dignity are beset by the constant fear of dishonour and humiliation; fear of old age and death constantly haunts him during his youth; physical strength of the body is in danger of being challenged and trounced by stronger opponents; enemies constantly keep him on his toes regarding his security and well-being as he does not know who amongst his acquaintances is the proverbial black-sheep!

The claim of having knowledge, sagacity and erudition has the fear of being offset, cancelled and rejected during debates, competitions and questionings (leading to utter humiliation and disgrace instead of honour and acclaim that one expects for himself by the possession of these virtues).

Other eclectic qualities and noble virtues that a gentleman possesses are under constant fear from wicked people who relish at the opportunity to first seduce and then denounce a person who possesses them.

In this way therefore, everything and all possessions in this world are subject to some or the other kind of fear. The only way to get rid of this constant sense of fear is to renounce the cause of the fear altogether—i.e. to renounce the world completely; to detach oneself from the world and emotional responses to it; to become neutral and dispassionate and calm before the fear gets the better of one's peace of mind.

To wit, 'renunciation' is the only remedy to cure perpetual fear arising from the world.

[The next verse nos. 32-33 further elaborate upon the fears that constantly worry a person in his life.]

आक्रान्तं मरणेन जन्म जरसा चात्युज्वलं यौवनं

सन्तोषो धनलिप्सया शमसुखं प्रौढाङ्गनाविभ्रमः ।
 लोकैर्मत्सरिभिर्गुणा वनभुवो व्यालैर्नृपा दुर्जनैः
 अस्थैर्येण विभूतयोऽप्युपहता ग्रस्तं न किं केन वा ॥ ३२॥

(32) ākrāntaṁ maraṇēna janma jarasā cātyujvalaṁ yauvanaṁ
 santōṣo dhanalipsayā śamasukhaṁ prauḍhāṅganāvibhramaḥ ।
 lōkairmatsaribhirguṇā vanabhuvō vyālairnrpā durjanaiḥ
 asthairyēna vibhūtayō'pyupahatā grastaṁ na kiṁ kēna vā ॥ 32॥

(32) AAKRAANTAM MARANENA JANMA JARASAA CHAATYUJJVALAM YAUVANAM
 SANTOSHO DHAN-LIPSAYAA SHAM-SUKHAM PRAU-DDHAANGANAA-VIBHA-MAHA /
 LOKAIRMATSARIBHIRGUNAA VANBHUVVO VYAALAIRNRIPAA DURJANAIHA
 ASTHAIRYENA VIBHOOTYO-APYU-PAHATAA GRASTAM NA KIM KEN VAA //

(32) [Besides the fears and cares outlined in the previous verse no. 31, this verse highlights some more aspects of it. Refer also to the next verse no. 33.]

'Birth' is preyed upon and attacked by death (birth is surely to be followed by death). Colourful 'youthful days' are overshadowed by the dark cloud of old age and its drudgery. 'Happiness and peace arising out of contentment' are endangered by unending greed, rapacity and yearning. The virtue of 'self-control' and its rewards are undermined by the temptation of voluptuous and gay women. The different 'virtues' are under threat from jealous and unscrupulous persons. 'Life in a forest' is beset by the fear of wild animals. Even the most righteous of 'kings' are in danger constant from wicked ministers and evil advisors. 'Power and riches' are accompanied by uncertainties and risks.

In all sooth and without gainsay, what in this world is not beset with some or the other kind of fear, anxiety and uncertainty?

आधिव्याधिशतैर्जनस्य विविधैरारोग्यमुन्मूल्यते
 लक्ष्मीर्यत्र पतन्ति तत्र विवृतद्वारा इव व्यापदः ।
 जातं जातमवश्यमाशु विवशं मृत्युः करोत्यात्मसात्
 तत्किं तेन निरङ्कुशेन विधिना यन्निरमितं सुस्थिरम् ॥ ३३॥

(33) ādhivyādhīśatairjanasya vividhairārōgyamunmūlyatē
 lakṣmīryatra patanti tatra vivṛtadvārā iva vyāpadaḥ ।
 jātaṁ jātamavaśyamāśu vivaśaṁ mr̥tyuḥ karōtyātmasāt
 tatkiṁ tēna niraṅkuśēna vidhinā yannirmitaṁ susthiram ॥ 33॥

(33) AADHI-VYAADHI-SHATAIRJANASYA VIVIDHAI-RAAROGYA-MUNMOOLYATE
 LAKSHMIRYATRA PATANTI TATRA VIVRIT-DWAARAA EVA VYAAPADAHA /
 JAATAM JAATAMVASHYA-MAASHU VIVASHAM MRITYUHA KAROTYAA-TMASAAT
 TATKIM TENA NIRANKUSHENA VIDHINAA YANNIR-MITAM SUSTHIRAM //

(33) [Other constant fears and anxieties are outlined here. The poet says that nothing that the Creator has created is stable and eternal in his creation.]

‘Health’ is constantly being destroyed and its glory eroded by a variety of ailments that afflict the body and the mind. ‘Riches and wealth’ are under constant threat from different adversities, various risks and uncountable uncertainties. ‘Life and its very foundation, birth’ are under constant fear of being devoured by the Goddess of Death sooner or later.

So therefore, say, what is permanent in this creation? Nothing, surely. Hence, it is wise and advisable to discard this world where everything is transient and short-lived, where no permanent peace and happiness can ever be expected. So what is the use of pursuing pleasures that give sorrow and grief in their wake?

भोगास्तुङ्गतरङ्गभङ्गतरलाः प्राणाः क्षणध्वंसिनः
स्तोकान्येव दिनानि यौवनसुखस्फूर्तिः प्रियासु स्थिता ।
तत्संसारमसारमेव निखिलं बुद्ध्वा बुधा बोधका
लोकानुग्रहपेशलेन मनसा यत्नः समाधीयताम् ॥ ३४॥

(34) bhōgāstuṅgatararaṅgabhaṅgataralāḥ prāṇāḥ kṣaṇadhvaṁsinah
stōkānyēva dināni yauvanasukhasphūrṭiḥ priyāsu sthitā ।
tatsaṁsāramasāramēva nikhilam buddhvā budhā bōdhakā
lōkānugrahapēśalēna manasā yatnaḥ samādhiyatām ॥ 34॥

(34) BHOGAA-STUNGATARANGA-BHANGA-TARALAAHA PRAANAAHA
KSHANA-DHWANSINAH
STOKAANYEVA DINAANI YAUVAN-SUKHA-SFOORTIHA PRIYAASU STHITAA /
TATSANSAAR-MASAAR-MEVA NIKHILAM BUDHVAA BUDHAA BODHAKAA
LOKAA-NU-GRAHA-PESHALENA MANASAA YATNAHA SAMAADHEE-YATAAM //

(34) [The poet stresses that nothing is stable in this transient world, and everything is under the peril of perishing under the onslaught of the tide of time. Therefore he advises moral and spiritual teachers to teach the society of the futility of worldly pursuit and the rewards of seeking self-realisation and enlightenment that gives abiding happiness and true peace. Refer also to verse no. 36.]

‘Enjoyment of worldly pleasures and comforts and luxuries of material world’ are like the wave during high tide. It sweeps a man off his feet with it, but soon it leaves him swooning and feeling disoriented when the tide of excitement caused by enjoyment subsides, and the objects of pleasure and comfort decay and give away with the passage of time.

Similarly, ‘enjoyment of the company of women and indulgence in sensual pleasures’ are also temporary because they last only for a few days (and sooner or later they betray the person and leave him sore aggrieved).

Taking these points into consideration, oh wise teachers, you must have realised the futility of this world and the perils of getting entangled in its web. So first of all you practice an exemplary life yourself in order to attain supreme bliss and beatitude, and also take pity on the common people and teach them about the path that would give them true peace and happiness; tell them about the ‘Truth’ and warn them about the ‘Falsehood’.

[The poet advises moral preceptors to first practice what they preach so that their utterances are convincing for others. Since ‘example is better than precept’ and ‘it’s better for a good leader to lead from the front’, they should first renounce their own attachment with the world before advising others to do so. This verse is a veiled caustic commentary on the modern-day ‘god-men’ and ‘holy people’ who preach austerity and self-control to gullible disciples and to the public at large during huge congregations, but are far away in their personal lives from what purport to preach and expect from others.]

भोगा मेघवितानमध्यविलसत्सौदामिनीचञ्चला
आयुर्वायुविघटिताब्जपटलीलीनाम्बुवद्भङ्गुरम् ।
लोला यौवनलालसास्तनुभृतामित्याकलय्य द्रुतं
योगे धैर्यसमाधिसिद्धसुलभे बुद्धिं विधध्वं बुधाः ॥ ३५॥

(35) bhōgā mēghavitānamadhyavilasatsaudāminīcañcalā
āyurvāyuvighaṭṭitābjapaṭalīlīnāmbuvadbhaṅguram ।
lōlā yauvanalālasāstanubhṛtāmityākalayya drutaṁ
yōgē dhairyasamādhisiddhasulabhē buddhiṁ vidhadhvaṁ budhāḥ ॥ 35॥

(35) BHOGAA MEGHAVITAANA-MADHYA-VILA-SATSAU-DAAMINEE-CHANCHALAA
AAYURVAAYU-VIGHATTI-TAABJA-PATALEE-LEENAAMBU-VANDBHANGURAM /
LOLAA YAUVAN-LAAL-SASTANU-BHRITAA-MITYAA-KALAYYA DRUTAM YOG
DHAIRYA-SAMAADHI-SIDDHA-SULABHE BUDDHIM VIDHA-DHVAM BUDHAAHA //

(35) [This verse is an extension of the idea expressed in the previous verse regarding the impermanent nature of every sort of enjoyment in this world and the futility of worldly pursuits. So a wise and intelligent person is advised to do Yoga, or meditation, that leads to the attainment of Samadhi, which is a trance-like state of transcendental existence when the ascetic experiences the supreme form of bliss.]

The enjoyment of sensual pleasures of the world is as transient and temporary as the lightening that streaks across the body of the cloud.

A man’s life is as unstable and momentary as the drop of water coming down from the clouds and settling on the petal of a lotus flower, because it falls off soon by even the slightest gust of wind that makes the lotus shake.

The desire for enjoyment of youthful days is equally temporary (because old age inevitably takes over).

So oh wise and enlightened men, you should therefore heed wise council and concentrate your attention and mind in meditation that comes easily by having

patience and equanimity. This will help your mind to be calm and stable, which in turn would help you to see the truth and pursue the path of true happiness and joy that comes by renouncing all your attachment with this deluding world.

[A stable mind will help you to overcome the many temptations that would try their best to distract you and deflect your attention from your chosen path. If the mind fails, all your efforts would come tumbling down like a house of cards. By doing meditation you would attain supreme bliss, and it would be a perpetual experience that will leave you virtually in a state of trance, known as Samadhi.]

आयुः कल्लोललोलं कतिपयदिवसस्थायिनी यौवनश्रीः

अर्थाः संकल्पकल्पा घनसमयतडिद्विभ्रमा भोगपूगाः ।

कण्ठाश्लेषोपगूढं तदपि च न चिरं यत्प्रियाभिः प्रणीतं

ब्रह्मण्यासक्तचित्ता भवत भवभयाम्बोधिपारं तरीतुम् ॥ ३६॥

(36) āyuhḥ kallōlalōlaṁ katipayadivasasthāyinī yauvanaśrīḥ
arthāḥ saṁkalpakalpā ghanasamayataḍidvibhramā bhōgapūgāḥ ।
kaṇṭhāślēṣopagūḍhaṁ tadapi ca na ciraṁ yatpriyābhiḥ praṇītaṁ
brahmaṇyāsaktacittā bhavata bhavabhayaṁbōdhipāraṁ tarītum ॥ 36॥

(36) AAYUHA KALLO-LALOLAM KATIPAYADIWAS-STHAAYINEE YAUVAN-SHREEHA
ARTHAHA SANKALPAKALPAA GHAN-SAMAYATDIDVI-BHRAMAA BHOGA-POOGAHA
/
KANTHAA-SHLE-SHOPAGOODHAM TADAPI CHA NA CHIRAM
YATPRIYAABHIHA PRANEETAM
BRAHMANYAA-SAKTA-CHITTAA BHAVAT BHAVA-BHAYAAMBHODHI-PAARAM
TAREETUM //

(36) [On transient nature of life. Refer also to verse no. 34.] A man's life is transient, momentary and unpredictable as a current or wave in water. The charms of youth have a short span and they last but only for a few days. The riches and their accompanying majesty, powers, fame, pomp, comforts and pleasures would run out or exhaust themselves soon like the thought process of a fickle mind. Indeed, all sensual pleasures and gratifications would pass away like a bolt of lightening in the cloud during the rainy season (or as in a cloud that appears in autumn). Even embrace of one's beloved does not last long.

Therefore, oh wise people, in order to get across this wild and frightening ocean of life, you should dwell on and meditate upon the supreme and transcendental Truth known as 'Brahm', the pure Consciousness and the supreme Soul or the supreme Spirit of creation, with steadfast devotion in your mind.

[To wit, if you want to free yourself from the fear that is inherent in life in this mundane gross world of transmigration and wish to attain eternal peace and happiness, then the best way for you is to take recourse to mediation upon Brahm as this method will certainly and without gainsay give you an eternal sense of bliss and beatitude.

In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 76.]

कृच्छ्रेणामेध्यमध्ये नियमिततनुभिः स्थीयते गर्भवासे
 कान्ताविश्लेषदुःखव्यतिकरविषमो यौवने चोपभोगः ।
 वामाक्षीणामवज्ञाविहसितवसतिवृद्धभावोऽप्यसाधुःसंसारे
 रे मनुष्या वदत यदि सुखं स्वल्पमप्यस्ति किञ्चित् ॥ ३७ ॥

(37) kṛcchrēṇāmēdhyamadhyē niyamitanubhiḥ sthīyatē garbhavāsē
 kāntāviślēṣaduḥkhavyatikaraviṣamō yauvanē cōpabhōgaḥ ।
 vāmākṣīṇāmavajñāvihasitavasativṛddhabhāvō'pyasādhuḥsaṁsārē
 rē manuṣyā vadata yadi sukham svalpamapyasti kiñcit ॥ 37 ॥

(37) KRICHRE-NAAMEDHYA-MADHYE NIYAMIT-TANUBHIHA STHEEYATE
 GARVHAVAASE
 KAANTAA-VISHLESH-DUKKHAVYATI-KARVISHAMO YAUVANE CHOPA-BHOGAHA /
 VAAMAAKSHEENAAM-VGYAAVIHSI-TAVASATI-VRIDDHO-BHAAVO-APYASAADHUHA-
 SANSAARE
 RE MANUSHYAA VADATA YADI SUKHAM SWALPA-MAPYASTI KINCHIT //

(37) [This verse emphasises that no phase in the life of a living being, right from his conception in the mother's womb through his birth, childhood, adulthood and finally the old age, is really happy. A remarkable similarity is found between this verse and verse no. 136 of Goswami Tulsidas' classical book of prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika'.]

When a man is in the womb, he lies in an utterly miserable condition of the greatest of discomfort because he is surrounded by filth and has his limbs all cramped up.

During youth, sensual enjoyment is hindered by countless distractions that vex the spirit and makes a man feel apprehensive at the prospect of separation from his beloved.

Old age is obviously most feared as not only the man becomes feeble but he is also an object of ridicule and sneer by the same women who had adored him while he was young.

In this scenario, say oh wise men, is there a speck of real happiness in this world? No, surely there is not. The only thing that is sure is melancholy, grief, sadness and pain. None of the phases of life give true and abiding happiness and joy.

व्याघ्रीव तिष्ठति जरा परितर्जयन्ति
 रोगाश्च शत्रव इव प्रहरन्ति देहम् ।
 आयुः परिस्रवति भिन्नघटादिवाम्भो
 लोकस्तथाप्यहितमाचरतीति चित्रम् ॥ ३८ ॥

(38) vyāghrīva tiṣṭhati jarā paritarjayanti
rōgāśca śatrava iva praharanti dēham ।
āyuhḥ parisravati bhinnaghaṭādivāmbhō
lōkastathāpyahitamācaratīti citram ॥ 38॥

(38) VYAAGHREEVA TISHTHATI JARAA PARITARJAYANTI
ROGAASHCHA SHATRAVA EVA PRAHARANTI DEHAM /
AAYUHA PARISRAVATI BHINNA-GHATAA-DIVAAMBHO
LOKASTHATHAA-PYAHITA-MAACHARA-TITI CHITRAM //

(38) [More on transient nature of life.] It is most bewildering and astonishing to behold that while old age menacingly threatens and frightens a person out of his wits like a wild tigress, diseases attack the body mercilessly and surreptitiously like one's enemy does in a battlefield, and the life is draining out like water seeps out from a fractured or leaking pot—still people do not desist from sins and doing evil deeds of all sorts. Is it not most perplexing?

भोगा भङ्गुरवृत्तयो बहुविधास्तैरेव चायं भवः
तत्कस्येह कृते परिभ्रमत रे लोकाः कृतं चेष्टितैः ।
आशापाशशतोपशान्तिविशदं चेतः समाधीयतां
कामोत्पत्तिवशात्स्वधामनि यदि श्रद्धेयमस्मद्वचः ॥ ३९॥

(39) bhōgā bhaṅguravṛttayō bahuvidhāstairēva cāyam bhavaḥ
tatkasyēha kṛtē paribhramata rē lōkāḥ kṛtaṁ cēṣṭitaiḥ ।
āśāpāśaśatōpaśāntiviśadaṁ cētaḥ samādhīyatām
kāmoṭpattivaśātsvadhāmani yadi śraddhēyamasmadvacaḥ ॥ 39॥

(39) BHOGAA BHANGUR-VRITTAYO BAHUVIDHAA-STAIRESVA CHAAYAM BHAVAHA
TASKASYEHA KRITE PRIBHRAMAT RE LOKAHA KRITAM CHE-STHI-TAIHA /
AASHAA-PAASHA-SHTOPASHAANTI-VISHADAM CHETHA SAMAADHEE-YATAAM
KAAMOTPATI-VASHAATSWA-DHAAMANI YADI SRADDHYE-MASMAADVACHAHA //

(39) [More on transient nature of life.] The world and its numerous pleasures and enjoyments, its countless comforts and luxuries of various kinds—all of them are temporary and transient by nature. They are all the root cause of the cycle of birth and death, but ironically these temptations are so compelling that they drive a person to get trapped in a grip of entanglements of worldly life (because he seeks to drive comfort and pleasure from it, forgetting that all this is like a mirage seen in a desert).

Hence, oh wise person, I fail to understand why you blindly run behind this world with its illusory charms and temptations. Verily, I tell you, stop from wasting your precious energy and time in exerting yourself for such transient and impermanent things by freeing yours 'self' from the trap of having myriad desires, and thereby make your 'self' happy and free. Endeavour to divert your mind away from things that are gross and transient, and instead focus it on something that is

subtle, sublime and eternal. By doing so, you will annihilate all delusions and its attendant problems.

To wit, meditate upon the ‘Self’ so that you can attain supreme form of bliss and beatitude for yourself. [And the simple way to achieve this objective is to crush your worldly desires and yearnings.]

[Remember, oh wise man, that desires are inexhaustible if you do not try to control them. It’s like a wild-goose chase where you go on chasing one desire after another but you see no end to them. It’s like getting trapped in a web whose threads weave themselves around you, making it impossible for you to move out from its firm grip if you do not decide to do so determinedly.]

ब्रह्मेन्द्रादिमरुद्गणांस्तृणकणान्यत्र स्थितो मन्यते
यत्स्वादादिवरसा भवन्ति विभवास्त्रैलोक्यराज्यादयः ।
भोगः कोऽपि स एक एव परमो नित्योदितो जृम्भते
भो साधो क्षणभंगुरे तदितरे भोगे रतिं मा कृथाः ॥ ४०॥

(40) brahmēndrādīmarudgaṇāṁstrṇakaṇānyatra sthitō manyatē
yatsvādādivirasā bhavanti vibhavāstrailōkyarājyādayaḥ ।
bhōgaḥ kō'pi sa ēka ēva paramō nityōditō jr̥mbhatē
bhō sādho kṣaṇabhaṁgurē taditarē bhōgē ratim mā kr̥thāḥ ॥ 40॥

(40) BRAHMENDRAA-DIMRUDDANAAM-STRINA-KANAA-NYATRA STHITO MANYATE
YATSWAADAA-DWIRASAA BHAVANTI VIBHAVAA-STRAI-LOKYA-RAAJYAA-DAYAHA /
BHOOGAHA KO-API SA EKA EVA PARAMO NITYODITO JRIMBHATE
BHO SAADHO KSHANA-BHANGURE TADITARE BHOGE RATIM MAA KRITHAAHA //

(40) [Advise given to a wise ascetic.] Brahma the creator, Indra the king of Gods, the various Maruts or the Wind Gods (of which there are eleven in number), and all other Gods, whether senior or junior to them, are regarded as mere particles of dust or strands of straw (i.e. inconsequential) by a wise, enlightened and self-realised ascetic who has tasted the nectar-like bliss and beatitude that he experiences when he has attained oneness of his ‘own self’ with the ‘supreme Self’ of creation which is pure cosmic Consciousness.

To wit and in all sooth, when this exalted and eclectic stature has been attained by the ascetic, all other things look tasteless and insipid to him; even the lordship of the world and its accompanying praise, honour and joy as attained by these myriad gods do not appeal to him in the least.

Therefore, be wise and well-advised by concentrating yourself on that vibrant and sublime source of bliss and blessedness instead of anything else that is no comparison to it as all other things are much inferior and gross—because only the former would give you eternal comfort and pleasure, and not the latter as all the rest are transient and perishable by their inherent nature.

[“Tell me, who would be so foolish to let go of an opportunity to grasp an eternal source of abiding and true happiness, and barter it for something that is

artificial and hollow from the inside, and which gives only a temporary whiff of superficial happiness.”]

सा रम्या नगरी महान्स नृपतिः सामन्तचक्रं च तत्
 पार्श्वे तस्य च सा विदग्धपरिषत्ताश्चन्द्रबिम्बाननाः ।
 उद्वृत्तः स च राजपुत्रनिवहस्ते बन्दिनस्ताः कथाः
 सर्वं यस्य वशादगात्स्मृतिपथं कालाय तस्मै नमः ॥ ४१ ॥

(41) sā ramyā nagarī mahānsa nrpatiḥ sāmantacakraṁ ca tat
 pārśvē tasya ca sā vidagdhapariṣattāścandrabimbānanāḥ ।
 udvṛttaḥ sa ca rājaputranivahastē bandinastāḥ kathāḥ
 sarvaṁ yasya vaśādagātsmr̥tipathaṁ kālāya tasmai namaḥ ॥ 41 ॥

(41) SAA RAMYAA NAGARI MAHAANSA NRIPATIHA SAAMANTA-CHAKRAM CHA TAT
 PAARSWE TASYA CHA SAA VIDAGDHA-PARISHATTAASHNADRA-BIMBAA-NANAAHA /
 UDVITTHA SA CHA RAAJPUTRA-NIVAHASTE BANDI-NASTAAHA KATHAAHA
 SARVAM YASYA VASHAADA-GAATSMRITI-PATHAM KAALAAYA TASMAI NAMAHA //

(41) [On the power of ‘Kaal’, i.e. fate, time and circumstance, in this ever-changing world.] That lovely city, that great king or feudal lord that ruled over it, the circle of haughty knights and arrogant barons who flanked his sides, the cabinet of shrewd councillors, skilled ministers and scholarly advisors, the damsels with moon-like pretty faces that thronged the royal court, the bards and minstrels who bent over their backs to sing glories and litany of praises—say, under whose command and driven by whose power did they all fleet away into the realm of memory, into oblivion, and became a dream of the past?

Verily indeed, that Authority and Power is called ‘Kaal’ (fate, destiny, time, circumstance and era that are ever-changing like the world to which they relate). Salutations to this all-powerful Sovereign (i.e. Kaal) over whom no one can rule!

यत्रानेकः क्वचिदपि गृहे तत्र तिष्ठत्यथैको
 यत्राप्येकस्तदनु बहवस्तत्र नैकोऽपि चान्ते ।
 इत्थं नेयौ रजनिदिवसौ लोलयन्द्वाविवाक्षौ
 कालः कल्यो भुवनफलके क्रीडति प्राणिशारैः ॥ ४२ ॥

(42) yatrānēkaḥ kvacidapi gr̥hē tatra tiṣṭhatyathaikō
 yatrāpyēkastadanu bahavastatra naikō'pi cāntē ।
 itthaṁ nēyau rajanidivasau lōlayandvāvivākṣau
 kālaḥ kalyō bhuvanaphalakē krīḍati prāṇīśāraiḥ ॥ 42 ॥

(42) YATRAANEKAHA KVACHIDAPI GRIHE TATTRA TISTHA-TYA-THAIKO

YATRAA-PYEKA-STADANU BAHAVA-STATRA NAIKO-API CHAANTE /
ITTHAM NEYAU RAJANI-DIVASAU LOLA-YANDVAA-VIVAA-KSHAU
KAALHA KALYAU BHUVAN-PHALAKE KREEDATI PRAANI-SHAARAIHA //

(42) [The metaphor of the 'Game of Chess or Draught' to stress the unpredictable nature of Fate. Here, the symbolic 'game' is played between a person and his 'fate'.]

In one's own 'house or home' symbolised by the check-board used in the game of chess or dice, there were many members who occupied its various corners and spaces like the many pieces used in a game of chess or the different faces of the dice. With the passage of time one observes that while there were so many members in the beginning now only a few or even one or none survive just like the case of the game of chess or dice where the pieces fall away from the board, one after another, either quickly or slowly.

The game is so unpredictable that the player's pawn which was in one given square on the board at one moment may find itself somewhere else the next moment or even be ejected out of the board by some equal or more powerful force (such as the pawn of the opponent or any other piece such as the rook, horse, queen etc. that the latter chooses to use against it).

[To wit, the player starts the game with the squares of the board on his side occupied by all the pieces. He moves them in the wisest possible way he can think of so that he can outsmart his opponent, who in this case is his 'fate'. But to his dismay, a situation arises where he is checkmated and left high and dry!]

So, life is also a gamble where in the end one may end up with nothing, lonely and a pauper, or find one's self in a situation quite different to what one had ever imagined. There are uncountable imponderables and uncertainties lurking in the dark alley of one's future.

In essence, all this boils down to the incontrovertible fact that one's fate is unpredictable and most unreliable. So therefore, what is the sense in hankering for material things and sensual pleasures and artificial comforts in this world when it is well-known that both the world and its components are transient and perishable?

Verily indeed, 'Kaal' is an expert player of dice (i.e. an expert controller of one's destiny, one's fate), and no one will ever defeat him in this game.

आदित्यस्य गतागतैरहरहः संक्षीयते जीवितं
व्यापारैर्बहुकार्यभारगुरुभिः कालोऽपि न ज्ञायते ।
दृष्ट्वा जन्मजराविपत्तिमरणं त्रासश्च नोत्पद्यते
पीत्वा मोहमयीं प्रमादमदिरामुन्मत्तभूतं जगत् ॥ ४३ ॥

(43) ādityasya gatāgatairaharahaḥ saṁkṣīyatē jīvitam
vyāpārairbahukāryabhāragurubhiḥ kālō'pi na jñāyatē ।
drṣṭvā janmajarāvīpattimarāṇam trāsaśca nōtpadyatē
pītvā mōhamayīm pramādamadirāmunmattabhūtam jagat ॥ 43 ॥

(43) AADITYASYA GATAA-GATAI-RAHARAHHA SANKSHEEYATE JEEVITAM

VYAAPAARAIRBAHU-KAARYA-BHAAR-GURUBHIHA KALO-API NA GYYAYATE /
 DRISHTVAA JANMA-JARAA-VIPATTI-MARANAM TRAASAHCHA NOTPADYATE
 PEETVAA MOHAMAYEEM PRAMAADA-MADIRAA-MUNMATTA-BHOOTAM JAGAT //

(43) [On how a living being is deluded by worldly life. The metaphor of the cycle of 'the day and the night'.]

Every day, with the rise and setting of the sun, our life shortens that much, by every hour and minute that passes away. We are so heavily burdened by worldly affairs and so many obligations to be fulfilled that we do not realise how the time of life flies away (bringing us closer to the end), not even having the time to feel the fear of the horrors of birth and childhood that we had already endured, and that of old age and death that would inevitably come to us one day in the future (because we do not have time to spare for such thoughts from the busy schedule of our over-burdened life).

Alas indeed! The world has become stupefied by drinking the wine of 'delusions'.

[To wit, we are so deluded by the affairs of life that we have no time to spare for things that really matter for us—viz. the well-being of our true 'self' and the real goal of life which is to break free from the virtually endless cycle of birth and death with it incumbent horrors, pain, miseries and grief. The numerous temptations of the world and its material things make us so deluded that we cannot think beyond it.

The poet has compared this world to intoxicating liquor. People who drink this strong brew forget that their life is getting eroded with every sunrise and sunset. People are so burdened with numerous worldly pursuits that they fail to recognise the flow of time. They see the pain of birth, the horrors of life and the debilitating effects of old age, and finally death all around them every day, but still they do not understand that it is a symbolic picture of their own life; they do not bother. Such is the magical spell of temptations and delusions created by the world.

Under the delusions caused by intoxicating wine of attachments and infatuations, it's very unfortunate that the whole creation and its resident creatures do not pay attention and notice that their life is gradually ebbing away with every sunrise and sunset (i.e. everyday, by the passing of every moment). All of them are so preoccupied with worldly humdrum business that they don't have time or the inclination to note that the time is passing away.

It is for the same reason that the sight of a continuous cycle of birth, old age, sufferings and death do not scare them (because they don't have the time to ponder and contemplate and reflect upon at the sorry state of affairs and the trap that they have fallen into). It appears as if the whole world is so intoxicated by the wine of 'Moha' (attractions, attachments, allurements, infatuations and delusions pertaining to the world) and 'Pramaad' (being engrossed in sensual gratification, comforts and pleasures) that it has lost track of the fast fading away of life and time.

The next verse no. 44 further elaborates upon the idea expressed in this verse. Also refer to verse nos. 36, 49 and 76.]

रात्रिः सैव पुनः स एव दिवसो मत्वा मुधा जन्तवो
 धावन्त्युद्यमिनस्तथैव निभृतप्रारब्धतत्तत्क्रियाः ।
 व्यापारैः पुनरुक्तभूत विषयैरित्थंविधेनामुना

संसारेण कदर्थिता वयमहो मोहान्न लज्जामहे ॥ ४४ ॥

(44) rātriḥ saiva punaḥ sa ēva divasō matvā mudhā jantavō
dhāvantyudyaminastathaiva nibhr̥taprārabdhatattatkriyāḥ ।
vyāpāraiḥ punaruktabhūta viṣayairitthamvidhēnāmunā
saṁsārēṇa kadarthitā vayamahō mōhānna lajjāmahē ॥ 44 ॥

(44) RAATRIHA SAIVA PUNAHA SA EVA DIVASO MTVAA MUDHAA JANATAVO
DHAAVANTUDYA-MINASTATHAIVA NIBHRIT-PRAARABDHA-TATTATKRIYAAHA /
VYAAPAAIRIHA PUNARUKTA-BOOT VISHAYAI-RITHAM-VIDHE-NAAMUNAA
SANSARENA KADARTHITAA VAYAMAHO MOHAANNA LAJJAAMAHE //

(44) [On the great delusory nature of life. This verse is an extension of the previous verse no. 43.]

The sun rises and the day is born; the former runs its course through the sky and sets in the evening to give rise to the night. This cycle continues eternally in a boring repetition; every single 'day and night' is a rhythmic repetition of its previous one, and will be repeated again and again forever. But the greatest of all ironies is that the human being is so stupid that inspite of seeing this happen, he continues to toil endlessly in this world, pursuing the same objects and objectives, the same comforts and pleasures, without getting bored and fed up by them, without realising that they are stale and humdrum, without getting disillusioned with them. He is impelled by the force of the accumulated effects of his past deeds. He continues to hanker for, to greed and yearn for the enjoyments of the same things of the world over and over again, never getting tired of this repetition, because he is perpetually ensnared by the net of delusions.

Astonishingly, caught in this whirlpool of routine mundane activities, he is so befooled that he never feels ashamed of himself, or even annoyed at and guilty of his stupidity. That is why he does not seek renunciation and does not do meditation so that he can break free from this endless and meaningless cycle so as to attain liberation and emancipation for his 'self'. [Here, the 'self' refers to his pure conscious Atma or the 'soul', the 'spirit', which is his true identity as compared to his physical gross body which he erroneously thinks to be his identity.]

न ध्यातं पदमीश्वरस्य विधिवत्संसारविच्छित्तये
स्वर्गद्वारकवाटपाटनपटुर्धर्मोऽपि नोपार्जितः ।
नारी पीनपयोधरोरुयुगलं स्वप्नेऽपि नालिङ्गितं
मातुः केवलमेव यौवनवनच्छेदे कुठारा वयम् ॥ ४५ ॥

(45) na dhyātaṁ padamīśvarasya vidhivatsaṁsāravicchittayē
svargadvārakavāṭapāṭanapaṭurdharmō'pi nōpārjitaḥ ।
nārī pīnapayōdharōruyugalaṁ svapnē'pi nālīṅgitaṁ
mātuḥ kēvalamēva yauvanavanacchēdē kuṭhārā vayam ॥ 45 ॥

(45) NA DHYAATAM PADAMEESHWARASYA VIDHIVATSANSAAR- VICHCHITTAYE
SWARGA-DWAARA-KAVAAT-PAATAN-PATURDHA-RMO-API NOPAARJITAH /
NAARI PEENA-PAYODHA-RORU-YUGALAM SWAPNE-API NAALINGITAM
MAATUHA KEVALA-MEVA YAUVAN-VANA-CHHEDE KUTHAARAA VAYAM //

(45) [On how life has been wasted away, the poet's disillusionment with it, and his disenchantment with the gross mundane world of delusions.] It is so unfortunate that I have not done any worthwhile thing to free myself from the vicious and painful cycle of birth and death so as to attain liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation for myself.

I have not meditated upon the lotus-like holy feet of the supreme Lord Shiva that would have helped me to break free from the bondage of this world.

I did not bother to build sufficient strength for myself by doing some religious meritorious deed known as Dharma (deeds that are auspicious, righteous and noble) that would have made it possible for me to knock open the door of heaven for myself.

I kept myself so busy in worldly affairs that I did not even find time in my dreams to enjoy embracing and pressing the youthful breasts of young ladies.

In fact, all that I did by taking birth was to act like an axe to cut away the youthfulness of my mother and bleed her womb! This is the only thing worthy of mention that I managed to do in this world. [In all sooth and without doubt, how ashamed I am of myself.]

[In this verse, the learned poet uses his own instance to stress how a creature wastes his life away in futile activities without doing any worthwhile thing that would sufficiently prepare him to break free from the endless and tiring journey through countless wombs, and to attain emancipation and salvation for himself so that his soul, which is his 'true identity', can finally rest in peace.

The poet regrets that he got none of the four legendary fruits that one expects to get as a reward in life. These four fruits are the following: 'Artha' or financial well-being, 'Dharma' or religious merit, 'Kaam' or sexual gratification, and 'Moksha' or emancipation and salvation. Thus, his life has gone to waste.

In the context of this verse, the reader should also refer the following two verses, i.e. verse nos. 46 and 47, to understand its full import.]

नाभ्यस्ता प्रतिवादिवृन्ददमनी विद्या विनीतोचिता
खड्गाग्रैः करिकुम्भपीठदलनैर्नाकं न नीतं यशः ।
कान्ताकोमलपल्लवाधररसः पीतो न चन्द्रोदये
तारुण्यं गतमेव निष्फलमहो शून्यालये दीपवत् ॥ ४६ ॥

(46) nābhyastā prativādivṛṇdadamanī vidyā vinītōcitā
khaḍgāgraiḥ karikumbhapīṭṭhādanairnākaṁ na nītaṁ yaśaḥ ।
kāntākōmalapallavādharaśaḥ pītō na candrōdayē
tāruṇyaṁ gatamēva niṣphalamahō śūnyālayē dīpavat ॥ 46 ॥

(46) NAABHYASTAA PRATIVAADI-VRINDA-DAMANI VIDYAA VINEETOCHITAA
KHANGAAGRAIHA KARIKUMBHA-PEETHADALA-NAIRNNAAKAM NA NEETAM
YASHAHA /

KAANTAA-KOMAL-PALLAVAA-DHARARASAAH PEETO NA CHANDRODAYE
TAARUNYAM GATAMEVA NISHPHALMAHO SHOONYAALAYE DEEPWAT //

(46) [The poet's disillusionment with life and its futile wasting away; and his disenchantment with the gross mundane world of delusions.]

I have not acquired proper scholarship and erudition that qualifies a cultured man to defeat his hosts of opponents in a debate.

I have also not acquired martial skills and expertise in warfare so that I could fence off and kill (or defeat; conquer) my strong enemies who can be compared to an elephant, thereby entitling me to get name and fame throughout the world as a great warrior.

And I did not even sip the juice of passion from the lips of beautiful women during moonlight nights.

Verily indeed, my life has been spent in vain like a lamp that is lit in a deserted house. [In all sooth, what is the use of this lamp; who benefits from its light? This lamp exhausts its oil and flickers to die away, leaving the house as deserted and haunted as before. So is my life: My youth passed away in futile pursuit; I served neither the interest of my 'own self' nor of 'anyone else' in this world. I just wasted my life away.]

[The following verse no. 47 further builds upon this theme of disillusionment with life.]

विद्या नाधिगता कलङ्करहिता वित्तं च नोपार्जितं
शुश्रूषापि समाहितेन मनसा पित्रोर्न सम्पादिता ।
आलोलायतलोचनाः प्रियतमाः स्वप्नेऽपि नालिङ्गिताः
कालोऽयं परपिण्डलोलुपतया काकैरिव प्रेर्यते ॥ ४७ ॥

(47) vidyā nādhigatā kalaṅkara-hitā vittam ca nōpārjitam
śuśrūṣāpi samāhitēna manasā pitrōrna sampādītā ।
ālōlāyatalōcanāḥ priyatamāḥ svapnē'pi nālingitāḥ
kālo'yam parapiṇḍalōlupatayā kākairiva prēryatē ॥ 47 ॥

(47) VIDYAA NAADHIGATAA KALANKA-RAHITAA VITTAM CHA NOPAARJITAM
SHUSHROO-SHA-API SAMAAHITENA MANASAA PITRORNA SAMPAADITA /
AALOLAAYATA-LOCHANAAHA PRIYATAMAAHA SWAPNE-API NAALINGITAAHA
KAALO-AYAM PARAPINDA-LOLUPTAYAA KAKAIRIV PRERYATE //

(47) [The poet's disillusionment with life and its futile wasting away; and his disenchantment with the gross mundane world of delusions.]

I had not acquired any knowledge or skill that is of any worth, that can be said to be auspicious and without any shortcomings or taints or defects, either from the temporal perspective or from the spiritual perspective.

I had not earned money and wealth that could have helped me to sustain my self (and maintain my self-respect and dignity as well as to enjoy the comforts of the

material world), and to do some charity (that would help me accumulate some religious merit).

I did not serve anyone, even my parents, with a pure heart and clean conscience. [If I did serve someone then it was with some vested self-interest.]

I did not, even in my dreams, embrace my lover with pretty, bright, full and round eyes that were rolling in passion. [I pretended to be a religious man; I pretended to be a man who has overcome passions and sensual urges. I pretended to be one who practices exemplary self-control over the natural urges of his sensual instincts, one who tries to show that he leads a life of virtues by camouflaging his desires, lusts and passions by forcefully suppressing them against his wishes.]

I spent my life in vain like a greedy and lowly crow who feeds upon leftover food thrown away by others. [I could not make an honest and decent livelihood; I survived by crooked means and ate unholy food that was discarded by others. I subjected myself to untold humiliation, indignities and ignominy; I degraded the holy stature of my soul by my abhorable and desecrating deeds.]

[To wit, I spent my life in futility, wasting away my precious energy and time just to feed myself like a crow would. I did nothing to nourish my Atma or soul, and to ensure for my long-term good in the way of salvation, emancipation, liberation and deliverance for myself. I am full of repentance now; I am very anguished and awfully sorry in my heart.]

[Note: If we read verse nos. 45, 46 and 47 together, the meaning becomes clear. The poet laments that his entire life, from his youth through his adult days up till the time he has become old, has been wasted away. He did nothing for his true welfare and cared nothing for his own future; he did not arm himself to attain freedom from the grip of delusions and the cycle of transmigration so that he can find eternal peace and happiness.

He laments and feels remorseful that he neither fully enjoyed the joys, the happiness, the achievements, the acclaim, the pleasures and the comforts of this world, nor did he gain anything by way of spiritual merit that would entitle him to attain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death with its attendant miseries and torments.

He lost the opportunity to get happiness and joy from this material world and its sensual objects because he did not fully equip himself to do so, and at the same time he lost the chance to derive a feeling of bliss and blessedness by pursuing the spiritual way of life.]

वयं येभ्यो जाताश्चिरपरिचिता एव खलु ते
समं यैः संवृद्धाः स्मृतिविषयतां तेऽपि गमिताः ।
इदानीमेते स्मः प्रतिदिवसमासन्नपतना
गतास्तुल्यावस्थां सिकतिलनदीतीरतरुभिः ॥ ४८ ॥

(48) vayaṁ yēbhyō jātāścīraparicitā ēva khalu tē
samaṁ yaiḥ saṁvrddhāḥ smṛtīviṣayatām tē'pi gamitāḥ ।
idānīmētē smaḥ pratidivasamāśannapatanā
gatāstulyāvasthām sikatilanadītiratarubhiḥ ॥ 48 ॥

(48) VAYAM YEBHYO JAATAA-SCHIRA-PARICHITAA EVA KHALU TE
SAMAM YAIHA SAMVRIDDHAAHA SMRITI-VISHAYATAAM TE-API GAMITAAHA /
EDAANEE-METE SMAHA PRATIDIVAS-MAASNNA-PATANAA
GATAASTULYAA-VASTHAAM SIKATILA-NADEETEERA-TARUBHIHA //

(48) [On the transient nature of life.] My parents who gave me birth have long passed away. My compatriots, friends and siblings, with whom I grew up, played, studied and lived with, have also become part of memory or history. I myself am passing my days as a countdown to the ever approaching death.

Verily indeed, I am like a tree growing on the banks of a swiftly flowing river that undercuts through the sand on its banks, thereby under-cutting at my roots also. I don't know when this tree would topple over (die) and fall into the river (of time).

[The poet compares his life to a plant on the sandy banks of a river. Ravaged by the river currents, the plant hangs in a precarious state, ready at any time to collapse into the river. The poet recalls that it is long time since his parents had passed away, and his friends have also passed away one after another, leaving him desolate and forlorn to face his destiny alone. He feels utterly remorseful at the thought that he one day he would also fall into the jaws of death like the dear ones whom he had witnessed going one after another. It is so regrettable that he had not prepared himself for this eventuality while there was time for him.

To wit, when he saw those whom he held so close to his heart and felt endeared to leave him one by one, he should have realised the transient nature of life, and he should have done some meritorious deed which would have equipped him to cross over the horrors of death with confidence that he would not have to face another life of desolation and separation from his near and dear ones by obtaining an eternal life of blessedness that comes with salvation and emancipation of the soul.]

आयुर्वर्षशतं नृणां परिमितं रात्रौ तदर्थं गतं
तस्यार्ध्यस्य परस्य चार्धमपरं बालत्ववृद्धत्वयोः ।
शेषं व्याधिवियोगदुःखसहितं सेवादिभिर्नीयते
जीवे वारितरङ्गचञ्चलतरे सौख्यं कुतः प्राणिनाम् ॥ ४९॥

(49) āyurvarṣaśataṁ nr̥ṇāṁ parimitaṁ rātrau tadardhaṁ gataṁ
tasyārdhyasya parasya cārdhamaparaṁ bālatvavṛddhatvayōḥ ।
śēṣaṁ vyādhiviyōgaduhkhasahitaṁ sēvādibhirnīyatē
jīvē vāritaraṅgacañcalatarē saukhyaṁ kutaḥ prāṇinām ॥ 49॥

(49) AAYURVARSHATAM NRINAAM PARIMITAM RAATRAU TADARDHAM GATAM
TASYAARDHYASYA PARASYA CHAARDHAM-PARAM BAALATVA-VRIDDHA-TVA-YOHA
/
SHESHAM VYAADHI-VIYOGA-DUKKHA-SAHITAM SEVAADI-BHIRNEEYATE JEEVE
VAARI-TARANGA-CHANCHAL-TARE SAUKHYAM KAUTAHA PRAANI-NAAM //

(49) [Life is short, with a limited span of maximum of a hundred years. It flows away like a wave in an ocean. What and how can one expect lasting happiness in it?]

Life of a person is limited on an average to around a hundred years (as ordained by the Creator). Out of this, a half (i.e. fifty years) is wasted away in the darkness of night. [During this time, man is expected to remain home as no external work can be done. This is the time to relax and sleep after the day's toil.]

Half of the remaining time, i.e. roughly twenty-five years of the remaining fifty years of life, is spent in childhood, adolescence and old age. [A quarter of the total lifespan of a hundred years is spent during childhood and old age.]

The last part of the time in a person's lifespan, i.e. roughly twenty-five years, are spent in earning a livelihood, pursuing passions, suffering from ailments, grieving for losses of various kinds, and serving others.

What is left now? Say honestly, in this life, which is like the ever moving wave of an ocean, how can one expect to acquire true and lasting happiness and peace; where is the time for it?

[The learned poet poignantly points out to the fact that if one tries to fulfil his worldly desires and responsibilities at the same time as attaining his spiritual objectives then it is like riding on two boats simultaneously. Life has a very short span, the outer limit being merely a hundred years. This is an ideal figure, for the average span is even shorter than that. In this limited time, one can either engage himself in worldly pursuits to obtain happiness and pleasures of a temporary kind, or to renounce it and follow the path that would lead him to fulfil his spiritual objectives of emancipation and salvation that would give him eternal blessedness, bliss, beatitude and felicity.

In the context of this verse, refer also to verse nos. 33, 36, 43-44, 76.]

क्षणं बालो भूत्वा क्षणमपि युवा कामरसिकः
क्षणं वित्तैर्हीनः क्षणमपि च सम्पूर्णविभवः ।
जराजीर्णैरङ्गैर्नट इव वलीमण्डिततनुः
नरः संसारान्ते विशति यमधानीयवनिकाम् ॥ ५० ॥

(50) kṣaṇam bālō bhūtvā kṣaṇamapi yuvā kāmarasikaḥ
kṣaṇam vittairhīnaḥ kṣaṇamapi ca sampūrṇavibhavaḥ ।
jarājīrṇairāṅgairnata iva valīmaṇḍitatanuḥ
naraḥ saṁsārāntē viśati yamadhānīyavanikām ॥ 50 ॥

(50) KSHANAM BAALO BHOOTVAA KSHANA-MAPI YUVAA KAAM-RASIKAHA
KASHANAM VITTAIR-HEENAH KASHANA-MAPI CHA SAMPOORNA-VIBHAVAHA /
JARAA-JEERNAI-RANGAIR-NATA EVA BALEE-MANDITA-TANUHA
NARAH SANSAA-RAANTE VISHATE YAMDHAANEE-YAVA-NIKAAM //

(50) [The metaphor of a stage actor is employed to describe how a man lives an artificial life that, when analysed thoughtfully, shows his delusions and his ignorance about the reality.]

Like an artist or actor on stage, a person takes up several roles. He becomes like a child; then he becomes a youth lost in infatuation for his beloved. At times he is so miserable and acts like a pauper, and at other times he acts like a wealthy person.

While at one point of time he acts like a youthful man, strong and energetic, and at other times he becomes old and feeble.

When the time for the curtain to fall comes and the play draws to an end, he retires to the back of the stage, worn-out and wanting some rest.

[To wit, when the time for his exit from the world-like stage comes, i.e. when the time of death approaches, he is out of his wits because he feels spent and exhausted with no time and energy left to prepare himself for this harsh reality of life. On stage he had laughed and frolicked, but when he steps down he faces the gloomy facts of the harsh realities of his personal life.

When he was on stage he had camouflaged his personal life's miseries and grief by laughing heartily and delivering speeches with aplomb; he had played so many maverick tricks on the stage to please his spectators and audience, never allowing them to get a whiff of his personal problems. But behind the stage he feels miserable and distraught.

So likewise, when the time of death comes he regrets and laments that he had spent the entire life in serving, pleasing and comforting others, but gained nothing for his own self. He regrets for his vain life at the time when the tigress of death pounces upon him and sends him to oblivion like a stage actor who is out of the limelight when he steps down from the stage at the end of the drama.]

त्वं राजा वयमप्युपासितगुरुप्रज्ञाभिमानोन्नताः

ख्यातस्त्वं विभवैर्यशांसि कवयो दिक्षु प्रतन्वन्ति नः ।

इत्थं मानधनातिदूरमुभयोरप्यावयोरन्तरं

यद्यस्मासु पराङ्मुखोऽसि वयमप्येकान्ततो निःस्पृहाः ॥ ५१ ॥

(51) tvaṁ rājā vayamapyupāsitaguruprajñābhimānōnnatāḥ

khyātaṣṭvaṁ vibhavairyaśāṁsi kavayō dikṣu pratanvanti naḥ ।

itthaṁ mānadhanātīdūramubhayōrapyāvayōrantaraṁ

yadyasmāsu parāṅmukhō'si vayamapyēkāntatō niḥsprhāḥ ॥ 51 ॥

(51) TWAM RAAJAA VAYAMPU-PAASITA-GURU-PRAGYAA-BHIMAANONNA-TAAHA

KHYAATASTWAM VIBHVAIRVA-SHAANSI KAVAYO DIKSHU PRATANVANTI NAHA /

ETTHAM MAANA-DHANAATI-DOORMUBHAYOR-PYAAWA-YORANTARAM

YDYA-SMAASU PARAANGAMUKHO-ASI VAYAMAPYE-KAANTATO NIHA-SPRIHAAHA //

(51) [The poet compares an ascetic with a king.] 'You are a king who occupies an exalted stature by the virtue of your wisdom and skills typical of your ilk, but we (the ascetics) too are exalted and elevated in stature by the virtue of the wisdom and knowledge of the supreme Self that we have acquired from our teacher (Guru) whom we had served diligently.

Oh king! You are known and celebrated in the world by your pomp, pageantry, treasury and possessions; we too have great fame and are celebrated in the quarters inhabited by wise and learned men due to our eclectic knowledge and enlightenment.

Indeed we both have honour and recognition, but there is a vast difference between your renown and that of ours. [To wit, whereas the king is known for his worldly powers and riches, an ascetic is known for his spiritual powers and wealth. Therefore, there is no comparison between the greatness of the two. While the greatness and the authority of a king are related to the perishable, transient and gross world and is therefore alike it, the greatness of an ascetic is of the sublime and subtle kind as it is related to the authority and the powers of the eternal Spirit.]

So oh king, if you are indifferent to us and do not think high of us, we too neglect you and do not bother to show respect to you because you don't deserve it.'

[In essence in this verse an ascetic wants to inform a king that though he may not have the physical pomp and show that the latter possesses, yet he is much more higher and elevated in stature than him, he is much more merrier and happier than him, he is much more contented and fulfilled than him in every respect, he is much more honourable and praiseworthy than him. Refer also to the following verse no. 52.]

अर्थानामीशिषे त्वं वयमपि च गिरामीशमहे यावदर्थं
शूरस्त्वं वादिदर्पव्युपशमनविधावक्षयं पाटवं नः ।
सेवन्ते त्वां धनाढ्या मतिमलहतये मामपि श्रोतुकामा
मय्यप्यास्था न ते चेत्त्वयि मम नितरामेव राजन्ननास्था ॥ ५२॥

(52) arthānāmīśiṣē tvaṁ vayamapi ca girāmīśmahē yāvadarthaṁ
śūrastvaṁ vādidarpavyupaśamanavidhāvākṣayaṁ pāṭavaṁ naḥ ।
sēvantē tvāṁ dhanāḍhyā matimalahatayē māmapi śrōtukāmā
mayyapyāsthā na tē cēttvayi mama nitarāmēva rājannanāsthā ॥ 52॥

(52) ARTHAANAA-MEESHISHE TWAM VAYAMAPI CHA GIRAMEESHMAHE
YAAVADARTHAM
SHOORASTWAM VAADIDARPAVU-PASHAMANA-VIDHAA-VAKSHAYAM PAATAVAM
NAHA /
SEWANTE TWAAM DHANAADHYAA MATIMALA-HATAYE MAAMAPI SROTU-KAAMAA
MAYYA-PYAASTHAA NA TE CHETTVAYI MAMA NITARAAMEVA RAAJANNA-
NAASTHAA //

(52) [The poet compares an ascetic with a king.] 'Oh king! You exercise your powers of speech over your mortal treasures and command them to be given at your will, while we use the same powers of words to interpret and teach others the wealth of immortal knowledge contained in the timeless scriptures.

You have the skill to overcome your challenger in battle, while we do the same by subduing our challengers in debates on the scriptures and the knowledge of the Truth.

While you are served by the rich and seekers of mortal wealth so that they can overcome their lack of money, we are served by the human kind as a whole and sought after by the seekers of true knowledge and immortality who want to destroy the imperfections of their minds.

So oh king, if you have no regard for me, I too have none for you. To wit, I am no comparison to you and I occupy a stature much senior to you.'

[Refer verse no. 51 also.]

वयमिह परितुष्टा वल्कलैस्त्वं दुकूलैः
सम इव परितोषो निर्विशेषो विशेषः ।
स तु भवतु दरिद्रो यस्य तृष्णा विशाला
मनसि च परितुष्टे कोऽर्थवान्को दरिद्रः ॥ ५३ ॥

(53) vayamiha parituṣṭā valkalaistvaṁ dukūlaiḥ
sama iva paritōṣō nirviśēṣō viśēṣaḥ ।
sa tu bhavatu daridrō yasya tṛṣṇā viśālā
manasi ca parituṣṭe kō'rthavāṅkō daridraḥ ॥ 53 ॥

(53) VAYAMIHA PARITUSHTAA VALKALAI-STWAM DUKOOLAIHA
SAMA EVA PARITOSHO NIRVISHESHO VISHESHAHA /
SA TU BHAVATI DARIDRO YASYA TRISHNAA VISHAALAA
MANASI CHA PARITUSHTE KO-ARTHA-VAANKO DARIDRHA //

(53) [On the importance of the virtue of contentedness.] 'Oh king! Our satisfaction takes different forms. Whereas I am satisfied wearing the bark of a birch tree though we look like a pauper, you satisfy your needs with your rich garments and worldly riches. We are both contented in our own spheres, and therefore equal.

Remember, that one whose wants are unlimited (like in your case), is in fact a destitute overridden with poverty. It is the 'spirit of contentment' that makes both the rich and the poor alike in their feeling of happiness and joy, and not the material riches and possessions of the world.'

[The ascetic tells the king that the virtue of having contentedness in whatever one possesses is the underlying factor for one deriving happiness and joy in life. In that sense, a king who is satisfied with whatever comes his way in accordance to the dictates of his destiny, without yearning for more, is like an ascetic, and here then is a parallel between the two, the king and the ascetic, as both are alike and equally honourable.

But the similarity ends there. The king draws satisfaction from possession of worldly things that are perishable and impermanent, and so is his sense of contentedness that is short-lived. On the other hand, an ascetic has spiritual wealth that is eternal and of a glorious nature, hence his sense of contentedness is sublime and lasting.]

फलमलमशनाय स्वादु पानाय तोयं
क्षितिरपि शयनार्थं वाससे वल्कलं च ।
नवधनमधुपानभ्रान्तसर्वेन्द्रियाणां

अविनयमनुमन्तुं नोत्सहे दुर्जनानाम् ॥ ५४ ॥

(54) phalamalamaśanāya svādu pānāya tōyaṁ
kṣītirapi śayanārtham vāsasē valkalam ca ।
navadhanamadhupānabhrāntasarvēndriyāṇām
avinayamanumantum nōtsahē durjanānām ॥ 54 ॥

(54) PHALMAL-MASHANAAYA SWAADU PAANAAYA TOYAM
KSHITIRAPI SHAYA-NAARTHAM VAASASE VALKALAM CHA /
NAVADHANA-MADHUPAAN-BHRAANTA-SARVENDRA-YAANAAM
AVINYA-MANU-MANTUM NOTSAHE DURJA-NAA-NAAM //

(54) [On the life of a Sanyasi.] For food I have succulent fresh fruits; for drink I have the nourishing sweet liquid called water; to cover myself I have the vast sky; to recline for rest and to sleep I have the bed of the earth; for clothes I have the bark of trees. All these are sufficient for us.

This being so I cannot reconcile myself to the way of the rich who seem engrossed in drinking the nectar of delusions that are created by the pseudo charms of the sense objects of this gross mundane and perishable world around us.

I just cannot approve the evil ways of misled, ill-advised and ignorant people who have gone astray from the path of righteousness and auspiciousness because they are extremely deluded by the evil spell of wealth and worldly temptations that have been cast upon them.

[The poet says that when the Lord God and his creation, Nature, have provided for all his basic needs, and that too in abundance and without any taints, why would and why should he go for things that are worthless and only give misery in their wake. But the paradox is that the majority of people do not understand it.

When we have fresh fruit to eat, sweet water to drink, mother earth to sleep upon, and clothes of bark of trees (birch) to wear (i.e. when all our basic needs are met), why should we (true renunciates and Sanyasis) need to tolerate the rude and arrogant behaviour of the rich and powerful who are haughty, proud and intoxicated by their worldly wealth?]

अशीमहि वयं भिक्षामाशावासो वसीमहि ।
शयीमहि महीपृष्ठे कुर्वीमहि किमीश्वरैः ॥ ५५ ॥

(55) aśīmahī vayaṁ bhikṣāmāśāvāsō vasīmahī ।
śayīmahī mahīpṛṣṭhē kurvīmahī kimīśvaraiḥ ॥ 55 ॥

(55) ASHEEMAHI VAYAM BHIKSHAA-MAASHAA-VAASO VASIMAHİ /
SHAYEEMAHAI MAHEE-PRISTHE KURVEEMAHİ KIMEESHWARAIHA //

(55) [On the life of a Sanyasi.] When I can survive on food got as alms during my begging forays, when I can stay naked with the sky and its four quarters enveloping me like an invisible shroud or cloak to cover me from all sides, when I can sleep in

comfort on my back on the bare earth—say then, what have I to do with those who are rich and arrogant, like for instance the kings of the realm?

[A true Sanyasi, i.e. a person who has renounced the world, doesn't bother about riches and worldly comforts that come with wealth, and he also is not proud or boastful of his being a person who has renounced the world to become a Sanyasi. He rather abhors even the company of those who are such—rich and proud.]

न नटा न विटा न गायका
न च सभ्येतरवादचुञ्चवः ।
नृपमीक्षितुमत्र के वयं
स्तनभारानमिता न योषितः ॥ ५६ ॥

(56) na naṭā na viṭā na gāyakā
na ca sabhyētaravāḍacuñcavaḥ ।
nṛpamīkṣitumatra kē vayaṁ
stanabhārānamitā na yōṣitaḥ ॥ 56 ॥

(56) NA NATAA NA VITAA NA GAAYAKAA
NA CHA SABHYETARAVAAD-CHUNCHAVAHA /
NRIPA-BHEEKSHITU-MATRA KE VAYAM
STANA-BHAARAAN-MITAA NA YOSHITAA //

(56) [The poet says that a person who has renounced the world and become a Sanyasi should have no business to go to a king and appease him.]

We are not maverick stage actors, nor are we a pimp or a tout who stick to others like a parasite; we are not courtesans who sing in courts, nor are we any kind of cheap entertainers with obscene gestures and vulgar tongues; and neither are we voluptuous whores or court mistresses with full and robust breasts (who please the king with their lustful gestures).

So therefore, what purpose do we have to see the kings? What have we to do with them? [Why should a Sanyasi go and pamper a king? He shouldn't at all.]

[The poet says that no one with self-respect, honour and dignity would ever go and ask for anything from a king. This principle applies to all those who are rich and powerful because, with a few isolated exceptions, they all treat others who are not as fortunate and wealthy as themselves with utter contempt and disdain. Why would a person of even a rudimentary amount of self-respect allow his dignity and honour to be so grossly undermined and trampled upon for a few pennies or some small favour that these arrogant and haughty persons may throw towards them as if they were throwing some stale leftover food to a stray dog?]

विपुलहृदयैरीशैरेतज्जगज्जनितं पुरा
विधृतमपरैर्दत्तं चान्यैर्विजित्य तृणं यथा ।

इह हि भुवनान्यन्ये धीराश्चतुर्दश भुञ्जते
कतिपयपुरस्वाम्ये पुंसां क एष मदज्वरः ॥ ५७ ॥

(57) vipulahrdayairīśairētajjagajjanitaṁ purā
vidhr̥tamaparairdattaṁ cānyairvijitya tṛṇaṁ yathā ।
iha hi bhuvaṇānyanyē dhīrāścaturdaśa bhuñjatē
katipayapurāsvāmyē puṁsāṁ ka ēṣa madajvaraḥ ॥ 57 ॥

(57) VIPUL-HRIDYAI-REEHSHIRE-TAJJA-GAJJA-NITAM PURAA
VIDHRITA-MAPARAIRDA-TTAM CHAANYAIRVIJITYA TRINAM YATHAA /
EHA HI BHUVA-NAANYA-NYE DHEERAA-SCHATURDASHA BHUNJATE
KATIPAYA-PURASWAAMYE PUM-SAAM KA ESHA MADA-JJWARAHA //

(57) [In the following four verses, the poet castigates the modern-day Kings for their arrogance, wickedness, and lack of wisdom and piety. In this present verse, he compares the Great Emperors of yore with the small Kings of his time who think that they are as 'great and mighty' as the former though they are not even worth a speck of dust when compared to those Great Kings who had established great Empires in the past. He says:-]

In ancient times there were great emperors and empire-builders. They had magnanimous hearts, and ruled their realm with kindness, tolerance, forgiveness and patience as well as in accordance with the laws of Dharma.

These great kings and emperors had their kingdoms or empires stretching to the fourteen corners or divisions of creation¹, yet they weren't haughty and arrogant in the least.

They would even cheerfully give away huge tracts of earth to seekers who came to them with this wish (such as sages who wished to establish hermitages, or to hermits who wished to lead a serene life in forests).

I do not understand why the petty kings of today, who have sovereignty over only small parcels of land, act so arrogantly and rudely.

[To wit, these great kings and emperors weren't haughty and arrogant at all though they ruled over the entire earth at different times. They treated others, especially who were poor and deprived, well and with a lot of understanding and compassion. They had no vices, were of an upright character, acquired huge fortunes by righteous means, ruled with prudence and followed the laws of Dharma, i.e. righteously and in line with the rules of propriety and noble conduct in whatever they did. That is why their courts were attended by wise men; sages and other distinguished men of enlightenment used to visit them as the latter got due respect there. These great kings, in fact, patronised, sustained, protected and encouraged such learned, pious and holy men. So it was not wrong for Sanyasis to go to these great kings and emperors in the days long gone by.

But the situation has drastically changed for the worst now. The kings and emperors of today are indulgent in sensual pleasure, they are selfish, greedy, haughty, arrogant, ignorant and deluded. The wealth they have has been acquired by unlawful and unrighteous means, such as by deceit, falsehood, exploitation, usurpation, confiscation, coercion and loot etc. Therefore, a Sanyasi should desist from even seeking alms of food from the corrupt kings of today as such tainted food will corrupt his Atma or the pure conscious 'self'.]

[Note—¹The ‘fourteen divisions’ of creation, according to Hindu mythology, are the following: (A) The upper worlds called Urdhva Lokas are seven in number:— (i) Bhu/Bhūḥ, (ii) Bhuvaha/Bhuvah, (iii) Swaha/Swah, (iv) Maha/Mah, (v) Janaha/Janaḥ, (vi) Tapaha/Tapaḥ, and (vii) Satyam/Satyam. (B) The seven nether worlds or lower worlds called Adhaha/Adhaḥ Loka:—(i) Atal/Atala, (ii) Vital/Vitala, (iii) Suta/Sutala, (iv) Rasaatal/Rasātala, (v) Talaatal/Talātala, (vi) Mahaatal/Mahātal, and (vii) Paataal/Pātāla.]

अभुक्तायां यस्यां क्षणमपि न जातं नृपशतः
भुवस्तस्या लाभे क इव बहुमानः क्षितिभृताम् ।
तदंशस्याप्यंशे तदवयवत्वेशोऽपि पतयो
विषादे कर्तव्ये विदधति जडाः प्रत्युत मुदम् ॥ ५८॥

(58) abhuktāyām yasyām kṣaṇamapi na jātaṁ nrpaśataḥ
bhuvastasyā lābhē ka iva bahumānaḥ kṣitibhṛtām ।
tadaṁśasyāpyaṁśē tadavayavalēśē'pi patayō
viṣādē kartavyē vidadhati jaḍāḥ pratyuta mudam ॥ 58॥

(58) ABHUKTAA-YAAM YA-SYAAM KSHNAMAPI NA JAATAM NRIPASHATHA
BHUVASTASYAA LAABHE KA EVA BHAHUMAANAHA KSHITIBHRI-TAAM /
TADANSHASYAA-PYANSHE TADA-VAYA-VALE-SHE-API PATAYO
VISHAADE KRTAVYE VIDADHATI JADAAHA PRATUTA MUDAM //

(58) [The poet rues over the petty mindset of kings. He says:-] The whole earth has been ruled by hundreds of mighty kings and emperors ever since time immemorial, with not even a day that passed when there was no ruler over the vast realms of the earth. One ruler succeeded another in an unbroken chain since the time of yore.

The fact is that when one king started his rule he did it over the territory left over by some other king who had died and gone away into oblivion. So what is there for this new king to be proud of? Has he ‘created’ some new land or kingdom that was not there before him? So what glory is a new king entitled to?

Say, what an irony it is that instead of grieving at the fate of all kings who have died and gone away, the new king feels happy and elated as if he would not follow in their footsteps! Alas, what a fool is he; how deluded and ignorant is he!

मृत्पिण्डो जलरेखया वलयितः सर्वोऽप्ययं नन्वणुः
स्वांशीकृत्य तमेव संगरशतै राज्ञां गणा भुञ्जते ।
ते दद्युर्ददतोऽथवा किमपरं क्षुद्रा दरिद्रा भृशं
धिग्धितान्पुरुषाधमान्धनकणान्वाञ्छन्ति तेभ्योऽपि ये ॥ ५९॥

(59) mr̥tpiṇḍō jalarēkhayā valayitaḥ sarvō'pyayam nanvanuḥ
 svāmśīkr̥tya tamēva saṁgaraśatai rājñām gaṇā bhuñjatē ।
 tē dadyurdadatō'thavā kimaparam kṣudrā daridrā bhr̥ṣam
 dhigdhiḱtānpuruṣādhamāndhanakaṇānvāñchanti tēbhyō'pi yē ॥ 59 ॥

(59) MRITPINDO JAL-REKHAYAA VALAYITAH SARWO-APYAYAM NANVANUHA
 SWAAMSHEE-KRITYA TAMEVA SANGARSHATAI RAAGYAAM GANAA BHUNJATE /
 TE DADDYURDADATO-ATHAVAA KIMPARAM KSHUDRAA DARIDRAA BHRISHAM
 DHIGDHIKTAANPURUSHAA-DHAMAANDHANA-KANNANVAANCHANTI TEBHYO-API YE
 //

(59) [The poet condemns a Sanyasi who stoops so low as to ask for morsels of food from kings who are of low mentality and petty in their thoughts. He says:-]

The earth is nothing but a gross lump of clay that is surrounded on all sides with water. In the context of the vastness of the Lord's creation, it is but like a speck of dust embedded in the sand on the shore of a mighty ocean.

This small and virtually inconsequential bit of clay has been divided and subdivided by foolish kings who think that they have 'created' what they purport to call their 'great kingdoms'. But in fact these purported 'great kingdoms' are nothing but carvings or slices or slivers of clay from the limited volume of earth that is available.

The irony is that still these petty kings think that they are 'great rulers of vast realms'.

[They forget that the volume and diameter of the earth is limited for it is butted and bounded on all sides by the water of the ocean. The land is not 'rubber' that can be stretched even by an inch to satisfy the whims and ego of these haughty kings. In earlier days, this same land mass was ruled by smaller number of rulers, but as time went by the land was partitioned and sliced into smaller and still smaller fragments, each splinter of land being occupied by some petty king, which gave the impression that the number of kingdoms has increased many times. But on close examination even a fool would understand that this is an illusion created to deceive the mind and the intellect; it is nothing but wishful thinking to gratify one's urge to create a grandiose aura about one's self—howbeit false it may be! And the greatest irony of all things is that the kings who 'lord over such tiny bits of land' dare to call themselves mighty and great.]

Thus, these kings are truly inconsequential and have a petty mindset. They may take and give as they please (because they have no sense of propriety and self-esteem that would prevent them from doing so)—but oh the wise person who has renounced the temptations of the world, it does not behove of you to approach such kings for anything at all. It will be extremely demeaning and degrading for your exalted stature if you even contemplate to do so (i.e. to think that you will ask for alms from a king; no never, you shouldn't do it).

स जातः कोऽप्यासीन्मदनरिपुणा मूर्ध्नि धवलं
 कपालं यस्योच्यैर्विनिहितमलंकारविधये ।
 नृभिः प्राणत्राणप्रवणमतिभिः कैश्चिदधुना

नमद्भिः कः पुंसामयमतुलदर्पज्वरभरः ॥ ६० ॥

(60) sa jātaḥ kō'pyāsīnmadanaripuṇā mūrdhni dhavalam
kapālam yasyōcyairvinihitamalamkāraavidhayē ।
nr̥bhiḥ prāṇatrāṇapraṇamatibhiḥ kaiścidadhunā
namadbhiḥ kaḥ puṁsāmayamatuladarpajvarabharaḥ ॥ 60 ॥

(60) SA JAATAHA KO-APYAASEENMADAN-RIPUNAA MOORDHNI DHAVALAM
KAPAALAM YASYOCHYAIRVINIHITA-MALANKAAR-VIDHAYE /
NRIBHIHA PRAAN-TRAAN-PRAVAN-MATIBHIHA KAISCHIDA-DHUNAA
NAMADBHIHA KAHA PUNSAAM-YAMATUL-DARPA-JJWAR-BHARAHA //

(60) [This verse is in praise of ascetics who live a life like that of Lord Shiva, the Great God of ascetics, the Lord who is an epitome of renunciation and detachment which entitles him to possess such great mystical powers as possessed by no other Gods. Further, it also stresses that an ascetic is more honourable and praiseworthy as compared to others because Lord Shiva holds the skull of an ascetic in his hands to show respect to him.]

That ascetic is indeed worthy of praise and his life well lived whose skull, which is white in colour (the colour 'white' standing for holiness, purity and piety), is held by Lord Shiva, the 'enemy of lust and passion' (and hence called 'Madan-ripu'), in his own hands as a mark of respect for the departed soul. Lord Shiva holds the skull of only those who deserve the Lord's grace, respect and praise. So therefore, a person whose skull is held by Lord Shiva has indeed led a life that is praiseworthy and auspicious in every respect.

[Lord Shiva is the patron deity of ascetics, and like his devotees the Lord too has renounced the material charms of the world and involves himself in doing meditation all the time. Shiva has realised the mortal nature of this world so much that he holds a skull of a dead person as a reminder of the truth of life. This skull warns his devotees of the ultimate end of life in death, and it sort of acts as a deterring factor that prevents them from doing any evil act because they will carry away nothing with them at the time of death except the good deeds that they may have done while alive. The mighty and the humble, the rich and the pauper, the powerful and the weak—all die the same death, and what finally remains of this body which the person had been pampering all his life and for which he had made the world suffer leaves nothing but a 'white skull' after death! So, a wise and thinking man would be motivated to desist from all things unrighteous and inauspicious, all that is evil and sinful, all that for which he would regret later on. A wise man will see the reality of this world and the truth of life in it when he observes the skull of a dead man—because he realises that this will be his fate too. This observation and realisation fills him with profound renunciation and detachment from this material gross world and its charms. He is inspired to do something worthwhile for his true well-being and for a better future for his own 'self', i.e. his Atma or the soul, while still there is still time in his hands.]

This being the case, what sense is there in appeasing those (for instance, the kings) who are arrogant and haughty of their power, strength, might, possessions and fame, and begging before them just to sustain life that is inherently mortal and will come to an end one day?

[The ascetic must realise that life is mortal and will end one day—as symbolised by the 'skull'. So what is the use in attempting to keep the body alive by

begging for food from those who are arrogant and haughty, as this leads to insult of the soul's high stature, and humiliation of the self. Say, what is the use of sacrificing one's self-respect and honour by begging for food from undeserving people just to prolong the activities of the gross body when it is sure to cease all work and die one day?

Now, both the king and the ascetic die, but Lord Shiva shows honour to and pays his obeisance only to an ascetic by holding his skull in his hands while letting the skulls of the king and the mighty roll in dust of the cremation ground only to be licked by dogs and foxes!

An enlightened ascetic understands the significance and the import of the observation 'that Lord Shiva holds the skull of an ascetic in his hands' to realise two important points—viz. (i) that life is mortal and everyone would die, and (ii) it is better to die with honour so that even after death Lord Shiva praises the departed soul by holding his skull in his hands.

Thus, an ascetic feels happy and joyful that he is worthy of greater respect and is more exalted than even a famous king because even Lord Shiva has chosen to honour the former in comparison to the latter by holding his skull in his hands after his death, no matter how humble an ascetic may have been and how mighty and powerful the king may have been while they were both alive. This understanding helps an ascetic to maintain his high dignity and self-esteem while he is alive, and it also helps him to resist the temptation of approaching rich people, such as kings, to seek alms.

Lord Shiva is called “Kapaali”, meaning one who holds a skull in his hands, like one holds a cup. This skull actually is held by the Lord to remind the world that life culminates in death, and so let everyone beware, and let everyone desist from a sinful and evil way of life as nothing would be gained by it when one dies! It's another matter that no one pays heed to this obvious fact, and everyone keeps him or her self busy in the affairs of the gross material world as if he or she will never die.]

परेषां चेतांसि प्रतिदिवसमाराध्य बहुधा
प्रसादं किं नेतुं विशसि हृदय क्लेशकलितम् ।
प्रसन्ने त्वय्यन्तः स्वयमुदितचिन्तामणिगणो
विविक्तः संकल्पः किमभिलषितं पुष्यति न ते ॥ ६१ ॥

(61) parēṣāṁ cētāṁsi pratidivasamārādhyā bahudhā
prasādaṁ kiṁ nētuṁ viśasi hṛdaya klēśakalitam ।
prasannē tvayyantaḥ svayamuditacintāmaṇigaṇō
viviktaḥ saṁkalpaḥ kimabhilaṣitaṁ puṣyati na tē ॥ 61 ॥

(61) PARESHAAM CHETAANSI PRATIDIVAS-MAARAADHYA BAHUDHAA
PRASAADAM KIM NETUM VISHASI HRIDAYA KLESHA-KALITAM /
PRASANNE TWAYYANTAH SWAYA-MUDITA-CHINTAAMANI-GANO
VIVIKTAHA SANKALPAHA KIMABHILASHITAM PUSHYATI NA TE //

(61) [On true happiness.] Oh my ‘self’! All the while you’ve been trying to please others in many ways. For what purpose do you do it? Why don’t you find your true happiness and joy, an abiding source of bliss and peace in your own inner self, in your Atma? When that happens, the ‘Chintaamani gem’ (a magnificent self-illuminated gem that has mystical powers to remove all worries and satisfy all desires) present in your heart/bosom will illuminate your thoughts from within and without. [To wit, the pure consciousness known as the Atma that resides in your heart will tell you what is good for you and what is not. It will filter your thoughts and let you focus on what is truly good for your self.]

By fulfilling your worthy desires and extinguishing or totally eliminating your unworthy desires, it will ensure that you are satisfied and fulfilled.

[Here, the “Chintaamani” gem refers to the pure consciousness known as the Atma or soul. This Atma is self-illuminated in the sense that it knows what is good for the ascetic’s spiritual well-being. This is also the ‘sub-conscious aspect of the mind’ which constantly reminds a person about what is good and what is not, though often times one overrules its advice. It is only in this situation that a person comes to his ruin. The Atma will always tell him not to follow any evil path, and to avoid all manners of delusions pertaining to this material world. A person who meditates upon this Atma kind of ignites this lamp of enlightenment that would illuminate his inner self with the light of true awareness that enables a wise person to discriminate between what is auspicious and righteous on the one hand, and what is not on the other hand.]

So he makes wise choices that help him to overcome all fears arising out of countless worries and consternations that torment an ordinary living being in this world, and this in turn gives complete bliss and happiness to him.]

परिभ्रमसि किं मुधा क्वचन चित्त विश्राम्यतां
स्वयं भवति यद्यथा भवति तत्तथा नान्यथा ।
अतीतमननुस्मरन्नपि च भाव्यसंकल्पयन्
नतर्कितसमागमाननुभवामि भोगानहम् ॥ ६२॥

(62) paribhramasi kim mudhā kvacana citta viśrāmyatām
svayaṁ bhavati yadyathā bhavati tattathā nānyathā ।
atītamananusmarannapi ca bhāvyasaṁkalpayan
natarkitasamāgamānanubhavāmi bhōgānaham ॥ 62॥

(62) PARI-BHRAMASI KIM MUDHAA KVACHAN CHITTA VISHRAAMYATAAM SWAYAM
BHAVATI YADYATHAA BHAVATI TATTA-THA NAANYA-THAA /
ATEETA-MANANU-SMARA-NNAPI CHA BHAAVYA-SANKALPA-YANA
NAT-KIRTA-SAMAAGAMAANANU-BHAVAAMI BHOGAANAHAM //

(62) [The poet gives a practical advice to the mind to calm itself down. He says:-]

Oh Mind! Why are you wandering here and there (proactively, like an undecided vagabond seeking this and that but not knowing exactly what)? Rest somewhere (for otherwise you will exhaust yourself uselessly).

Remember: Whatever is destined to happen would happen nevertheless; nothing otherwise or contrary would happen. Anything or any work which has to happen is determined before hand; it will happen in a predetermined way, and in no other way. So, relax and take it easy. Even if you exhaust all your energy, struggle hard and sacrifice whatever (peace) you have, you will not be able to change anything, and there would be no result. So what is the use?

Hence, the best advice for you is to stop planning unnecessarily for the future; do not propose anything to yourself. To wit, since things will happen as destined for you, if you want something else it won't happen. This will cause misery for you. So why not let it go and take it easy. Take everything in your stride and do not feel unduly ruffled and agitated for the so-called failures that you think are because of your own lack of will or skills or opportunities.

Hence, practice equanimity and detachment; accept failures and successes as they come along, with equal calmness and poise. Bear the results with stoicism. This will give you contentment and peace.

One should neither think nor worry over the past nor should one waste time imagining about the future. Think of the present only, not of the past or the future—because you can't change the past and have no control over the uncertain future.

[To wit, one should work and live freely in this world, do one's best, but should not get involved in the affairs of the world as it gives fear of failure or a sense of joy at successes—because both failure and success are related to a world that is changeable and gross, and therefore transient and deluding. This stoic attitude and sense of equanimity helps one to overcome agitations and tensions of all kinds. It soothes the nerves, and gives an immense amount of peace and happiness in one's life.

From a practical point of view, this verse is an excellent advice for all of us who are so worked up about our failures and chances of success. The poet may seem pessimistic, but it is a practical advice in life. He does not mean that we sit idle and do nothing. He only means that we must not get unduly agitated and feel miserable about our failures and chances of success in life.

We must learn to take everything in our stride with a profound degree of equanimity, detachment, dispassion, fortitude and forbearance. This attitude helps a person to live a contented life and feel fulfilled, even if he has nothing to boast of in terms of material things and achievements.

The next verse no. 63 builds upon the ideas expressed in this verse.]

एतस्मादिवरमेन्द्रियार्थगहनादायासकादाश्रय
श्रेयोमार्गमशेषदुःखशमनव्यापारदक्षं क्षणात् ।
स्वात्मिभावमुपैहि संत्यज निजां कल्लोललोलां गतिं
मा भूयो भज भङ्गुरां भवरतिं चेतः प्रसीदाधुना ॥ ६३ ॥

(63) ētaśmādviramēndriyārthagahanādāyāsakādāśraya
śrēyōmārgamaśēṣaduḥkhaśamanavyāpāradakṣaṁ kṣaṇāt ।
svātmībhāvamupaihi saṁtyaja nijāṁ kallōlalōlāṁ gatim
mā bhūyō bhaja bhaṅgurāṁ bhavaratiṁ cētaḥ prasīdādhunā ॥ 63 ॥

(63) AETASMAADVIRA-MENDRI-YAARTHA-GAHANAADAA-YAASAKAADAA-SHRAYA
SHREYO-MARGAMASHESHA-DUKKHA-SHAMAN-VYAAPAAR-DAKSHAM KSHANAAT /
SWAATMI-BHAAVA-MUPAIHI SANTYAJA NIJAAM KALLO-LALOLAAM GATIM
MA BHOoyo BHAJA BHANGURAAM BHAVRATIM CHETAHA PRASEEDAA-DHUNAA //

(63) [The poet's advice to his heart and mind.] Oh my 'Mana' (i.e. my heart and mind)! Your well-being lies in being careful while passing through this world of enchanting sense objects as it is like a dense forest of lust and sensual enjoyment wherein there is nothing else but sorrows. So, pick your path though this forest with wisdom and sagacity so as to avoid getting entangled in its web of creepers of delusions or get pricked by its countless thorns. This wisdom will help you overcome so many untold troubles and problems. [In brief, do not get tempted by the sensual objects and their charms in this world. Live a life of detachment from them.]

Without getting distracted, aim for your destination—which is to attain eternity and abiding happiness and peace that comes with realisation of the Atma (which is pure consciousness and your true 'self') and liberation from the cycle of transmigration. This will grant you true sense of bliss and beatitude.

Therefore, settle down and have a peaceful and serene state of the mind that can eliminate all your sufferings (because mind that is restless is the seat of all problems). Discard all types of thought processes because they will keep you on the edge as they are fickle and impermanent like a drop of water perched on the edge of a leaf. Abandon all your attachments with this mortal and perishable world because it creates morbid delusions and endless agitations.

Instead, tread on the path of true spiritual knowledge and enlightenment that would illuminate your inner-self and eliminate all darkness of ignorance; it will give you peace of mind and contentedness of the heart.

[The poet is addressing himself. He says:- 'Withdraw from this world. Refrain from the path of sensual enjoyment, as it is extremely dangerous and slippery. Adopt the path that would lead you to eternal peace, the path of righteousness, the path of knowledge, self-realisation and enlightenment. Abandon the present nature of your fickle behaviour. Do not again be engaged to the desire for this unreliable mundane world and entangling relations of a family life. Be pure and cheerful. Enjoy a free life in its pristine beauty, and not a life mired by worries and fears untold.']

मोहं मार्जय तामुपार्जय रतिं चन्द्रार्धचूडामणौ
चेतः स्वर्गतरङ्गिणीतटभुवामासङ्गमङ्गीकुरु ।
को वा वीचिषु बुद्बुदेषु च तडिल्लेखासु च श्रीषु च
ज्वालाग्रेषु च पन्नगेषु च सुहृद्वर्गेषु च प्रत्ययः ॥ ६४ ॥

(64) mōham mārjaya tāmupārjaya ratim candrārdhacūḍāmaṇau
cētaḥ svargatarāṅgiṇītaṭabhuvāmāsaṅgamaṅgīkuru ।
kō vā vīciṣu budbudēṣu ca taḍillēkhāsu ca śrīṣu ca
jvālāgrēṣu ca pannagēṣu ca suhr̥dvargēṣu ca pratyayaḥ ॥ 64 ॥

(64) MOHAM MAARJAYA TAAMUPAARJAYA RATIM CHANDRAARDHA-
 CHOODAAMANAU
 CHETAHA SARWAGAT-TARANGINEE-TATA-BHUVAAMAA-SANGAM-MANGEE-KURU /
 KO VAA VEECHISHU BUDBU-DESHU CHA TADILLE-KHAASU CHA SREESHU CHA
 JWAALAAGRESHU CHA PANNA-GESHU CHA SURHIDVARGESHU CHA PRATYAYAHA //

(64) [The poet prods his Mana, the mind and heart, to distance itself from the temptations of this mortal world, and focus its attention on Lord Shiva, the Supreme One.]

Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! Discard all delusions and have devotion for Lord Shiva who is adorned by a crescent moon on his forehead. Think of living on the banks of the heavenly river Ganges (where you will find peace and joy of the spirit).

Tell me, what attraction do you find in this world? Tell me, can you put any reliance on things¹ that are by nature ever-changing and fickle, like the waves and foam on the surface of the ocean, like the lightening in the cloud, like the women who are inherently unreliable and are like the tip of fire that spares no one, like a serpent that is no one's friend, and like the river that looks so calm and soothing but which sweeps everything away when it is in spate?

[¹The 'things' referred to here are the many sense objects of this material world. The poet hints that all of them are impermanent and perishable like the instances sited here.]

चेतश्चिन्तय मा रमां सकृदिमामस्थायिनीमास्थया
 भूपालभुकुटीकुटीविहरणव्यापारपण्याङ्गनाम् ।
 कन्थाकञ्चुकिनः प्रविश्य भवनद्वाराणि वाराणसीः
 अथ्यापङ्क्तिषु पाणिपात्रपतितां भिक्षामपेक्षामहे ॥ ६५॥

(65) cētaścintaya mā ramāṁ sakṛdimāmasthāyinīmāsthayā
 bhūpālabhrukutīkutīviharaṇavyāpārapaṇyāṅganām ।
 kanthākañcukinaḥ praviśya bhavanadvārāṇi vārāṇasīḥ
 athyāpaṅktiṣu pāṇipātrapatitāṁ bhikṣāmapēkṣāmahē ॥ 65 ॥

(65) CHETA-SCHINTAYA MAA RAMAAM SAKRIDIMAAM-STHAAYINEE-MAASTHAYAA
 BHOOPAAL-BRIKUTEE-KUTEEVIHARANA-VYAAPAAR-PANYAANGANAAM /
 KANTHAACKNCHUKINHA PRAVISHYA BHAVAN-DWAARAANI VAARAANASIHA
 ATHYAA-PANKTISHU PAANI-PAATRA-PATITAAM BHIKSHAAM-PEKSHAAMAHE //

(65) [The poet alerts an ascetic about the fickle nature of the 'goddess of wealth' known as 'Ramaa' or 'Laxmi', whom he compares to a prostitute as she is faithful to none.]

Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! Be wary of Ramaa, the goddess of wealth and fortune, who is fickle and has no second thoughts about selling herself (i.e. she is unprincipled and unscrupulous). She lives between the eyebrows of kings. [That means, everything depends upon the whims of kings, and no one can be certain whom the king would reward with bountiful of largesse, and whom he would punish by

snatching whatever he has. A slight wrinkle on the king's eyebrow can mean doom for the most righteous person, while a smile on his face may mean a windfall of fortunes. None of these things can either be predicted or have any set rules to govern them just like a prostitute who is unpredictable and unreliable.]

This being the case, why should we (the ascetics) go to a king begging for food as alms? It will be better for us to rely upon our own fate as well as the patron god of Varanasi, i.e. Lord Shiva who is also the patron god of ascetics, by wearing simple clothes such as rags (as no one would either take it away from us nor would anyone bother to disturb us in this attire as we would pose no danger to the rich who keep the goddess of wealth with them), and stand somewhere near some random person's doorway, waiting to see what food comes naturally to us, without our asking for anything from anyone.

[The poet says that he would not go to a king to ask for food because these kings, or for that matter any other rich person, have become too arrogant and treat mendicants with disdain and contempt, as people who are useless and utter failures in society. The reason for this is Ramaa, the goddess of wealth, who has corrupted their wisdom and deluded their minds so much that they think that they are superior to other living beings, that they are all-powerful and can also prevail upon the gods, such as the 'god of death', by offering them costly offerings.

So it is far better to rely upon one's fate and Lord Shiva's grace by asking nothing from anyone. Let the ascetic stand quietly somewhere, and if his fate has provided that he will get something to eat, he is certain to get it, and otherwise not. Refer: verse no. 62.

An ordinary householder is god-fearing and wishes to do something meritorious in the day so that he can feel blessed when he goes to sleep in the night. So when he observes the ascetic standing at his doorway he would cheerfully and reverentially invite him to partake of some food as a means of purification of the meal as a whole. He thinks that by offering food to an ascetic he is offering it to Lord Shiva. But rich people and kings lack this thought because they are under the evil spell of the prostitute known as Ramaa!]

अग्रे गीतं सरसकवयः पार्श्वयोर्दाक्षिणात्याः

पश्चाल्लीलावलयरणितं चामरग्राहिणीनाम् ।

यद्यस्त्वेवं कुरु भवरसास्वादने लम्पटत्वं

नो चेच्चेतः प्रविश सहसा निर्विकल्पे समाधौ ॥ ६६ ॥

(66) agrē gītaṁ sarasakavayaḥ pāśvayōrdākṣiṇātyāḥ

paścālīlāvalayaraṇitaṁ cāmaragrāhiṇīnām ।

yadyastvēvaṁ kuru bhavarasāsvādanē lampatātvaṁ

nō cēccētaḥ praviśa sahasā nirvikalpē samādhau ॥ 66 ॥

(66) AGRE GEETAM SARAS-KAVAYAHA PAARSHWA-YORDAAKSHINAATYAAHA

PASHCHAALLEELAA-VALAYARNITAM CHAAMAR-GRAAHINEE-NAAM /

YADYASTTEVAM KURU BHAVARSAA-SWAADANE LAMPAT-TWAM

NO CHECCHE-TAHA PRAVISHA SAHASAA NIRVIKALPE SAMAADHAU //

(66) [The poet offers two choices to his Mana (mind and heart). He tells the ascetic through his own example to make a wise and thoughtful choice. He says:-]

If you are attracted to the sweet and attractive songs that are being sung near you by expert singers from the south even as beautiful ladies move lustfully around you with hand-held fans to blow sweet breeze upon you, and the movement of their hands produce an enticing sound of tinkling that comes from the bracelets worn by them—in short, if you wish to enjoy sensual pleasures like a man who would like to get intoxicated with wine though he knows it is harmful for him, then you are welcome to do as you please. [But remember—such pleasures are short-lived, and they will drain you out sooner than you think.]

On the other hand, if you wish to enjoy some juice that is of an eternal nature, a pleasure that has no match in this world (Nirvikalpa), then you must do meditation and attain the state of Samadhi (which is a state of transcendental existence when the person enjoys undiluted bliss and blessedness). [Remember: this enjoyment will rejuvenate you and energise your sagging spirit. It is a pleasure which will not drain you.]

[It is evident here that the poet advises an ascetic to bet for the sublime form of joy that comes from meditation as it is of a high quality, sustainable and rejuvenating. The pleasures of the senses are not only gross and transient but they also leave one drained and exhausted.]

प्राप्ताः श्रियः सकलकामदुधास्ततः किं
न्यस्तं पदं शिरसि विद्विषतां ततः किं ।
सम्पादिताः प्रणयिनो विभवैस्ततः किं
कल्पस्थितास्तनुभृतां तनवस्ततः किम् ॥ ६७ ॥

(67) prāptāḥ śriyaḥ sakalakāmadudhāstataḥ kiṁ
nyastam padam śirasi vidviṣatām tataḥ kiṁ ।
sampāditāḥ praṇayinō vibhavaistataḥ kiṁ
kalpasthitāstanubhṛtām tanavastataḥ kim ॥ 67 ॥

(67) PRAAPTAHA SHRIYAHA SAKAL-KAAM-DUDHAASTATAHA KIM
NYASTAM PADAM SHIRASI VIDVISHATAAM TATAHA KIM /
SAMPAA-DITAAHA PRANAYINO VIBHAVAI-STATAHA KIM
KALPA-STHITAA-STANU-BHRITAAM TANA-VASTATAHA KIM //

(67) [There are four questions that the poet wishes to ask.]

Of what good is it if you have amassed huge wealth to satisfy your worldly needs and desires of your sense organs?

Of what good is it if you have conquered all enemies and have put your foot on their heads?

Of what good is it if you are glorified, honoured and bestowed with titles by your well-wishers and sycophants whom you have served with your wealth, resources and other means?

And of what good is it if you have managed to prolong your life even though you know fully well that you are mortal and cannot live forever?

[To wit, the poet points out that all efforts a person makes in this gross mundane world come to a naught in the end. His entire life is spent in vain pursuits as he gains nothing worthwhile and sustainable. All the wealth he had accumulated will be left behind at the time of death. Even if one does not take this fact into consideration, then at least he must remember that this wealth had consumed all his energy during his lifetime, it had robbed him of his peace and rest, it had made him constantly worried about its safe-keeping, and it had made so many enemies for him.

The same applies to other points as well. A king may have conquered so many of his enemies, but at what cost? He had spilled blood; he had caused immense suffering; he had subdued one enemy but created many more. And when he dies he leaves everything behind. He has spent his entire life in worries and fears with nothing to gain at the end of the road. All his conquests would be enjoyed by those who come after him, but he himself had spent his life agitated and heavy with a guilty conscience.

All those whom a person serves are driven by self-interest. As long as he is able to serve them they show affection to him, and when he is unable to do so they abandon him. Similarly, when he has wealth, people flock to him; when he loses his wealth people avoid him.

A person wishes not to die, and so he does everything in his might to prolong life, but he forgets that the body is mortal and the more he becomes old the more he would suffer from physical discomfort. So what is the sense in prolonging life beyond what is destined for us, because at the end the gross body is destined to die. Instead, a wise man would be more concerned about his 'true self', i.e. his Atma or soul; he would invest his energy in caring for the welfare of his Atma rather than his body.]

भक्तिर्भवे मरणजन्मभयं हृदिस्थं

स्नेहो न बन्धुषु न मन्मथजा विकाराः ।

संसर्गदोषरहिता विजना वनान्ता

वैराग्यमस्ति किमितः परमर्थनीयम् ॥ ६८॥

(68) bhaktirbhavē maraṇajanmabhayaṁ hr̥disthaṁ

snēhō na bandhuṣu na manmathajā vikārāḥ ।

saṁsargadōṣarahitā vijanaṁ vanāntā

vairāgyamasti kimitaḥ paramarthanīyam ॥ 68॥

(68) BHAKTIRBHAVE MARAN-JANMA-BHAYAM HRIDI-STHAM

SNEHO NA BANDHUSHU NA MANMA-THAJAA VIKARAHA /

SANSARGA-DOSH-RAHITAA VIJANAA VANAANTAA

VAIRAAGYA-MASTI KIMITAHA PARMARTHA-NEEYAM //

(68) When one is faced with the fear of death and birth, i.e. from the cycle of transmigration and its attendant horrors, then one must overcome it by establishing devotion for Lord Shiva in his heart.

One must understand that all affectionate relationships, such as for one's friends and brothers, are some kind of fault associated with this world. [To wit, nothing is sustainable in this world. All relationships suffer from the same problems from which the world suffers—i.e. they are all transient and perishable. When one is associated with the world, one is bound to suffer from this company.]

So, one must not have any kind of company if one wishes to remain free from all worldly miseries. Instead, one would be well advised to go to the serene environment of the forest and spend his time alone, living joyfully and free from all sorts of taints, worries and grief.

So therefore, what more should one desire other than true renunciation and detachment?

तस्मादनन्तमजरं परमं विकासि

तद्ब्रह्म चिन्तय किमेभिरसद्विकल्पैः ।

यस्यानुषङ्गिण इमे भुवनाधिपत्य -

भोगादयः कृपणलोकमता भवन्ति ॥ ६९॥

(69) tasmādanantamajaraṁ paramaṁ vikāsi

tadbrahma cintaya kimēbhirasadvikalpaiḥ ।

yasyānuṣaṅgiṇa imē bhuvanādhipatya -

bhōgādayaḥ kṛpaṇalōkamataḥ bhavanti ॥ 69॥

(69) TASMAADANANTA-MAJARAM PARAMAMVIKASI

TADBRAHM CHINTAYA KIMEBHIR-SADVI-KALPAIHA /

YASYAANUSHANGIGANA E-ME BHUVANAADHIPATYA –

BHOGAADAYAHA KRIPANA-LOKAMATAA BHAVANTI //

(69) What is the use of getting agitated over something that is unreal and transitory? [Obviously, there is no sense in it.]

So be wise, and instead of it (i.e. the unreal, the imaginary and transient) meditate and contemplate upon Brahm, the Supreme One, the pure cosmic Consciousness which is self-illuminated, an entity that is universal, infinite, eternal, ageless, and the Absolute Truth and Reality. [To wit, focus your attention and devote your energy and time on something worthwhile by concentrating yourself on Brahm-realisation. Why should you do it? Here is the answer:-]

Verily, in all sooth and without any bit of exaggeration, when one realises or attains Brahm, all other worldly attainments or achievements fade away and seem inconsequential; all forms enjoyments of happiness, peace and comfort that one gets even by obtaining sovereignty of the whole world become meaningless and hollow when they are compared to the bliss, the beatitude, the felicity and the blessedness that one experiences on Brahm-realisation.

Therefore, an ascetic must understand that the hope of getting happiness and joy from anything associated with the gross mundane world is simply an illusion that has deluded the mind of petty people, for the real happiness and joy comes with meditating upon Brahm.

पातलमाविशसि यासि नभो विलङ्घ्य
 दिङ्मण्डलं भ्रमसि मानस चापलेन ।
 भ्रान्त्यापि जातु विमलं कथमात्मनीनं
 न ब्रह्म संस्मरसि निर्वृतिमेशि येन ॥ ७० ॥

(70) pāṭalamāviśasi yāsi nabhō vilaṅghya
 diṅmaṇḍalam bhramasi mānasa cāpalēna ।
 bhrāntyāpi jātu vimalam kathamātmanīnam
 na brahma saṁsmarasi nirvṛtimēśi yēna ॥ 70 ॥

(70) PAATAL-MAAVISHASI YAASI NABHO VILANDHYA
 DINMANDALAM BHAMASI MAANASA CHAAPALENA /
 BHRAANTYAAPI JAATU VIMALAM KATHAMAATMA-NEENAM
 NA BRAHM SANSMARASI NIVRITIMESHI YENA //

(70) [On life of meditation and self-realisation. Oh my mind! It's so unfortunate that you are so unstable, fidgety and restless that you wander from the earth to the nether world at one moment and to the skies in the next moment. You just wander aimlessly from one direction to another (like a rudderless ship or a kite detached from its string). [Say, why do you do it? It is obvious that you do it to get peace and happiness for yourself. But do you achieve any success in your endeavours? No, surely not, for had you got what you sought you would have stopped wandering. So now, listen to my advice as given below.]

Oh my mind! It's so regrettable that you do not, even by mistake, contemplate and meditate upon the supreme One known as Brahm who is self-illuminated, faultless, and a fount of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity (as he is pure Consciousness that resides within you, in the subtle space of your own heart, in the form of your Atma, your soul and your true 'self').

Now, since that fount of eternal happiness, joy and bliss that has no parallel and is perfect in every respect (a reference to Brahm) resides within you, it is so regrettable that you haven't reckoned this fact and attempted to reach this source that is so close to you, but instead of it you go hither and thither to drain your energy and waste your time in search of it elsewhere in the external world.

You must understand that Brahm-realisation will free you from the bondage of transmigration and its associated miseries, problems, torments and horrors.

किं वेदैः स्मृतिभिः पुराणपठनैः शास्त्रैर्महाविस्तरैः
 स्वर्गग्रामकुटीनिवासफलदैः कर्मक्रियाविभूमैः ।
 मुक्त्यैकं भवदुःखभाररचनाविध्वंसकालानलं
 स्वात्मानन्दपदप्रवेशकलनं शेषैर्वणिग्वृत्तिभिः ॥ ७१ ॥

(71) kiṃ vēdaiḥ smṛtibhiḥ purāṇapaṭhanaiḥ śāstrairmahāvistaraiḥ
 svargagrāmakuṭīnivāsaphaladaiḥ karmakriyāvibhūmaiḥ ।
 muktvaikaṃ bhavaduḥkhabhāraracanāvidhvaṃsakālānalaṃ
 svātmānandapadapravēśakalanāṃ śēṣairvaṇigvṛttibhiḥ ॥ 71 ॥

(71) KIM VEDAIHA SMRITIBHIHA PURAANA-PATHANAIHA
 SHAASTRAIRMAHAA-VISTARAIHA
 SWARGA-GRAAM-KUTEE-NIWAAS-PHALADAIHA KARMA-KRIYAA-VIBHHOOMAIHA /
 MUKTVAIKAM BHAVA-DUKKHA-BHAARA-RACHANAA-VIDHWANSA-KAALAA-NALAM
 SWAATMAANANDA-PADA-PRAVESHAKALANAM SHESHAIRVANI-GVRITTIBHIHA //

(71) What is use of reading the great scriptures such as the Vedas, the Smritis, the Purans and the different Shastras (i.e. the different branches of knowledge such as grammar, logic, philosophy, prose, poetry etc.), all of which are extensive and voluminous in their dimension? It is believed that the fruit of all these scriptures, as well as of doing other countless and varied rituals, performing religious ceremonies and observing so many sacraments (which are collectively called ‘Karma Kaand’ as they involve a lot of action and performance of deeds), is to find a place of residence in the heaven.

Say, what is the difference between the residents of this heaven and the great souls who live in villages? Both the places have dwelling huts where the soul stays during its long-haul journey of life; both are essentially temporary rest-houses for the journeymen.

So therefore, paying heed to those who advice the study and reading of the scriptures as well as those who advice doing many religious ceremonies is like listening to hawkers and traders in a market who surround their customers to strike a bargain to quick-sell their wares, unbothered about the real utility of the wares for the concerned person and if it will do any good to him!

[After all, both are merely temporary abodes for the soul in its journey through life till it reaches its final resting place. This is because once the auspicious effects of good deeds done by a creature are exhausted, the reason why he had found an abode in the heaven in the first place, he has to come back to this mortal world to continue with the rest part of the soul’s journey. Similarly, the residents of villages also die when their time is up in this life when they are forced to leave their abodes. Both the heaven dwellers and the village dwellers enjoy the basic comforts of their respective lives. But both these ways of life come to an end, and therefore they are not permanent and the final resting place for the soul.

Hence, tell me oh wise one, what is the difference between these dwellers of heaven in the sky and the villages on earth? So why do you spend your precious time in pursuing these scriptures and rituals if you do not get something that would permanently relieve you of the burden of life and death? So be well-advised and don’t waste your precious time in these pursuits. Life is short and the time is limited; put it to good and constructive use so that you get eternal peace and eternal rest.]

So, instead of getting entangled in this web it is good for you to meditate and contemplate upon Brahm as this pursuit will give you eternal peace and joy; it will give you the highest form of bliss, beatitude and felicity; it will make you feel blessed and fortunate; it will mark the end of your miseries and misfortunes.

Verily indeed and without any gainsay, this is the best bargain that you will ever strike for yourself; the rest is all hankering for traders' bargains in a congested and noisy market-place.

[In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 76 herein below, as well as some previous verses, such as 33, 36, 43-44.]

यतो मेरुः श्रीमान्निपतति युगान्ताग्निवलितः
समुद्रा शुष्यन्ति प्रचुरमकरग्राहनिलयाः ।
धरा गच्छत्यन्तं धरणिधरपादैरपि धृता
शरीरे का वार्ता करिकलभकर्णाग्रचपले ॥ ७२ ॥

(72) yatō mēruḥ śrīmānnipatati yugāntāgnivalitaḥ
samudrā śuṣyanti pracuramakaragrāhanilayāḥ ।
dharā gacchatyantam dharaṇidharapādairapi dhṛtā
śarīre kā vārtā karikalabhakarṇāgracapalē ॥ 72 ॥

(72) YATO MERUHA SREEMAANNI-PATATI YUGAANTAAGNI-VALITAH
SAMUDRAA SHUSHYANTI PRACHUR-MAKAR-GRAAHA-NILAYAAHA /
DHARAA GACCHHATYANTAM DHRANIDHAR-PAADAIRAPI DHRITAA
SHAREERE KAA VAARTAA KARIKALA-BHAKARNAA-GRACHAPALE //

(72) [On the impermanent nature of the entire creation; the perishable nature of this gross world.]

The fire of dooms-day will destroy even Mt. Sumeru, the grandest amongst the mountains (where the gods are believed to live).

The ocean which is a home to so many great marine creatures such as the crocodile and the alligator will also dry up.

Even the earth, which is seemingly so solid, heavy and dense, is rattled by an earthquake, and reduced to rubble.

No wonder than that this gross body (of a living being) is as shaky as the front lobe of a baby elephant's ear, and it too would be destroyed when the time comes. So, say, what reliance can be put on it?

[When the time comes, even the mighty, the great and the high perish. The lofty mountain called Sumeru, that ought to be everlasting as it is the abode of the gods, crumbles when the time for the end of creation comes, and so obviously will the gods who live there too perish with it.

The huge ocean that is a fathomless and endless reservoir of water would vaporise due to the intensity of heat generated by the fire at the time of dooms-day, though water is known to douse the fiercest of fires.

The earth, so obviously hard, solid and dense, crumbles like a dry cake of loose sand under the onslaught of an earthquake which shakes it like a sieve shaking dust.

The poet compares the unsteady nature of the body with the ears of a young elephant that is walking briskly because its ears shake violently during the process like a leaf does in a gust of wind.

Therefore the poet muses that there is no permanence in the body; one should not rely on it. So what is the great sense in worrying about an entity, here meaning the 'body', and trying to give it comfort and pleasure when one knows that it would have to be shed or abandoned one day at the time of death?

The learned poet is actually addressing the ascetic and advising him not to bother about the discomfort his physical body has to undergo in his spiritual pursuit, such as renouncing the comforts and pleasures of the material world, because the body will perish at the end of his time in this world which is sure to come one day or the other. So is it not advisable to pay attention on attainment of eternal peace and bliss by pursuing the spiritual path of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation.]

गात्रं संकुचितं गतिर्विगलिता भ्रष्टा च दन्तावलि -
दृष्टिर्नश्यति वर्धते बधिरता वक्त्रं च लालायते ।
वाक्यं नाद्रियते च बान्धवजनो भार्या न शुश्रूषते
हा कष्टं पुरुषस्य जीर्णवयसः पुत्रोऽप्यमित्रायते ॥ ७३ ॥

(73) gātram saṁkucitaṁ gatirvigalitā bhraṣṭā ca dantāvali -
dr̥ṣṭirnaśyati vardhatē badhiratā vaktram ca lālāyatē ।
vākyaṁ nādriyatē ca bāndhavajanō bhāryā na śuśrūṣatē
hā kaṣṭam puruṣasya jīrṇavayasaḥ putrō'pyamitrāyatē ॥ 73 ॥

(73) GAATRAM SANKUCHITAM GATIRVIGALITAA BHRASHTAA CHA DANTAAVALI -
DRISHTIRNASHYATI VARDHATE BADHIRATAA VAKTRAM CHA LAALAAAYATE /
VAAKYAM NAADRIYATE CHA BAANDHAV-JANO BHAARYAA NA SHUSHROOSHATE
HAA KASHTAM PURUSHASYA JEERNA-VAYASAH PUTRO-APYA-MITRAAYATE //

(73) [On old age, and its torments and hazards.] What a pitiful pain is old age! It's a pathetic situation when the whole body is wrinkled and shrivelled, when the steps totter and the gait becomes unsteady, the mind goes out of control for it becomes senile, the teeth come out and fall, the eyesight falters and is shrouded with cataract, the hearing is lost as deafness takes over, the saliva drips from the mouth and the voice falters and the speech becomes incoherent, neither do the kith and kin nor the wife now show any respect to the person or serve and nurse him any more, and the sad irony is that the son, for whom he had sacrificed all his life, behaves as if he was his greatest enemy instead of being his friend in times of his distress.

Indeed, a man undergoes immense torments and harrowing miseries during his old age when he is worn-out. [Refer also to the next verse no. 74.]

[The poet alerts a would-be ascetic about the futility of draining his energy for this world and expecting any happiness for himself from anyone, even his own body which he pampers so much. He must be warned that when he becomes old and feeble, he would have to suffer a lot. But by that time it would have been too late for him to pursue his spiritual goals as the body would have become so feeble and weak that even the most basic of functions would be difficult for it. So in effect the learned poet advises the ascetic to do something for his soul and spiritual well-being while still

there is time for him, when his body is yet in a working mode, and the situation at the present time is not that bad as it would be later on in life.]

वर्णं सितं झटिति वीक्ष्य शिरोरुहाणां
स्थानं जरा परिभवस्य तदा पुमांसम् ।
आरोपितास्थिशतकं परिहृत्य यान्ति
चण्डालकूपमिव दूरतरं तरुण्यः ॥ ७४ ॥

(74) varṇam sitam jhaṭiti vīkṣya śirōruhāṇām
sthānam jarā paribhavasya tadā pumāṁsam ।
ārōpitāsthīśatakam parihṛtya yānti
caṇḍālakūpamiva dūrataram taruṇyaḥ ॥ 74 ॥

(74) VARNAM SITAM JHATITI VEEKSHYA SHIRORUHAANAAM
STHAANAM JARAA PARIBHAVASYA TADAA PUMAAMSAM /
AAROPITAASTHI-SHATAKAM PARIHRITYA YAANTI
CHANDAALA-KOOPMIVA DOORTARAM TARUNYAHA //

(74) [More agonies of old age.] When young women see an old man with grey hairs on the head, which is symbolic of his inability to please them, they flee away from him at once as if they have come near a cursed well belonging to a Chaandaal, an out-caste person, which is surrounded by bones (i.e. a well near a slaughter-house).

[The thin and emaciated body of an old man shows his bones. The white hairs on his head indicates that he very old in age, and will therefore not be able to satisfy the passions and lust of young women like an adult man in his youthful days can do. The women fear that instead of entertaining them, this old fellow would start lecturing them on some outdated subject in which they are not interested. He is almost like their grand parent, and so it would be not good to show any disrespect to him by telling him to shut up when he begins his long lecture. So these women think prudent to run away from him as soon as they see him from a distance. An old man is useless and worthless for them.

The ‘Chaandaal’ is a person who skins animals. They usually work as butchers, cobblers and in tanneries. In Hinduism, it is not thought proper to drink water from a well near a Chaandaal’s home as the water and the well are sure to be polluted by flesh and blood of innocent animals who have been slaughtered which is regarded as a sinful act as these animals too are living beings who have the same right to live as the man who slaughters them just because they can’t resist and defend themselves. No creature has the right to snuff out the life from others.

Since the Chaandaals work as butchers, skinning animals after killing them, places near their colonies are usually surrounded by bones of slaughtered animals. So a man of other caste avoids going to a well in these colonies.

In this verse, the old man’s body is likened to a cage of bones, and it appears to be like a dying animal who suffers from some emaciating disease. The analogy is significant as it tells the ascetic that his body is as worthless and a structure of bones as that of an animal, and just like the Chaandaal who skins the animal and throws

away the bones, the ‘Kaal’, or death in its personified form, would do the same to him one day. Whether the body is cremated or buried, nothing of it will remain except bones which no one would touch. His son, his wife, his friends and his servants—all will fly away from his remains that lie in the cremation or the burial ground! So let him beware now when old age is still at a distance from him.]

यावत्स्वस्थमिदं शरीरमरुजं यावज्जरा दूरतो
यावच्चेन्द्रियशक्तिरप्रतिहता यावत्क्षयो नायुषः ।
आत्मश्रेयसि तावदेव विदुषा कार्यः प्रयत्नो महान्
संदीप्ते भवने तु कूपखननं प्रत्युद्यमः कीदृशः ॥ ७५॥

(75) yāvatsvasthamidaṁ śarīramarujaṁ yāvajjarā dūratō
yāvaccēndriyaśaktirapratihatā yāvatkṣayō nāyuṣaḥ ।
ātmaśrēyasi tāvadēva viduṣā kāryaḥ prayatnō mahān
saṁdīptē bhavanē tu kūpakhananaṁ pratyudyamaḥ kīdr̥śaḥ ॥ 75॥

(75) YAAVATSWASTHAMIDAM SHAREER-MARUJAM YAAVAJJARAA DOORATO
YAAVACCCHENDRIYA-SHAKTIRA-PRATIHATAA YAAVATKSHAYO NAAYUSHAHA /
AATMA-SHREYASI TAAVADEVA VIDUSHAA KAARYAHA PRAYATNO MAHAAN
SANDEEPTA BHAVANE TU KOOP-KHANANAM PRATYUDYAMAHA KEEDRISHAHA //

(75) [On true wisdom.] The right approach for a learned man is to strive in the best way he can for self-realisation and good of his Atma or his soul, which is his ‘true self’, while his body is still healthy, the mind has not become senile, he hasn’t grown old, his senses and limbs are still functioning properly, and his life hasn’t yet run out its full course.

Of what use is an effort of digging a well when the house has already caught fire and is burning?

[To wit, the poet emphasises that a wise person should prepare himself for death and exit from this world well in time. He must realise that he will have to regret awfully if he fritters away his life in worldly pursuits and does not do anything for his spiritual well-being. If he keeps postponing the latter effort till the time of old age, he wouldn’t be able to do anything then. He must remember that his body is the means by which he can prepare his Atma for eternal peace and happiness. And he must do it while the body allows him to do so, when it is still healthy and energetic, because when he becomes old and infirm he would not be able to do anything at all.

So therefore a wise man should strive for the deliverance of his soul before it is too late for him because one should dig a well in advance and not wait for his house to catch fire before he starts digging it. That’s nonsense and madness.

In effect, this verse concludes the arguments put forward to warn a man in the previous verses that deal with old age.]

तपस्यन्तः सन्तः किमधिनिवसामः सुरनदीं

गुणोदारान्दारानुत परिचरामः सविनयम् ।
 पिबामः शास्त्रौघानुत विविधकाव्यामृतरसान्
 न विद्मः किं कुर्मः कतिपयनिमेषायुषि जने ॥ ७६॥

(76) tapasyantaḥ santaḥ kimadhinivasāmaḥ suranadīm
 guṇōdārāndārānuta paricarāmaḥ savinayam ।
 pibāmaḥ śāstraughānuta vividhakāvyāmṛtarasān
 na vidmaḥ kiṁ kurmaḥ katipayanimēṣāyuṣi janē ॥ 76॥

(76) TAPASYANTA SANTAHA KIMADHINIWASAAMAHA SURNADEEM
 GUNO-DAARAA-NDAA-RAANUTA PARICHARAAMAHA SAVINAYAM /
 PIBAAMAHA SHASSTAU-DHAANUTA VIVIDHA-KAABYAA-MRITA-RASAAN
 NA VIDMAHA KIMI KURMAHA KATIPAYA-NIMESHAAYUSHI JANE //

(76) [Life is of a short duration, and the poet says that there are three options before him to choose from. What should he choose and do about this dilemma? This verse stresses on true wisdom and the importance of renunciation.]

‘I am at a loss to decide what to do in this brief span of my life.

Should I spend my time like a pious person, absorbed in meditation, practicing austerities and doing penances while living near the banks of the holy river Ganges?

Or should I continue to serve my family and devoted wife, enjoy her company and humbly fulfil my household obligations?

Or shall I spend my time in studying the different scriptures (such as the Vedas, the Purans, the Shastras etc. and drinking spiritual nectar of wisdom and enlightenment that is contained in their teaching) and literature of various kinds (such as prose and poetry with their off-shoots of grammar, phonetics, composition and narrative styles etc. to become a learned man of scholarship who gives lectures and discourses to others and gets honour in return)?

I am on the horns of a dilemma because the time I have in my hand is like the twinkling of the eye, very limited, of short duration, and of a fickle nature. So where do I have the time to accomplish these tasks to my satisfaction in this short period?’

[In the context of this verse, the reader should also refer to verse nos. 33, 36, 43-44, 49, 71, 77 and 79.

Life is of a short duration, and so the poet advises an ascetic not to waste his time in making choices out of the many options available to him in life, of which he sites three instances. If a man thinks that he would see all these options one by one and then decide which suits him well, he would be a foolish person because by the time he concludes that none of the options has met his needs of happiness and peace, it would have been too late for him as old age will be knocking at his door.

Therefore, a wise man is he who opts not to waste his time on these choices before him, and instead renounce all his attachments with this world of confusions and delusions, and directly adopt the path of meditation and contemplation that would not only give him access to eternal bliss and beatitude but would at the same time free him from the bondage of transmigration and its attendant horrifying experiences.]

दुराराध्याश्चामी तुरगचलचित्ताः क्षितिभुजो
 वयं च स्थूलेच्छाः सुमहति फले बद्धमनसः ।
 जरा देहं मृत्युर्हरति दयितं जीवितमिदं
 सखे नान्यच्छ्रेयो जगति विदुषोऽन्यत्र तपसः ॥ ७७ ॥

(77) durārādhyāścāmī turagacalacittāḥ kṣitibhujō
 vayaṁ ca sthūlēcchāḥ sumahati phalē baddhamanasah ।
 jarā dēhaṁ mṛtyurharati dayitaṁ jīvitamidam
 sakhē nānyacchrēyō jagati viduṣō'nyatra tapasah ॥ 77 ॥

(77) DURAARAADHYAA-SHCHAAMEE TURAGACHALA-CHITTAHA KSHITIBHUJO
 VAYAM CHA SHTOOLECHHAAHA SUMAHATI PHALE BADDHA-MANASA /
 JARAA DEHAM MRITURHARATI DAYITAM JEEVITAMIDAM
 SAKHE NAA-NYA-CCHREYO JAGATI VIDOSHO-ANYATRA TAPASAH //

(77) [On the futility of serving worldly masters such as kings, the fickle nature of the mind, and importance of meditation and austerities.]

Oh wise friend (“Sakhe; Vidusho”)! Even as it is difficult to please one’s ordinary lord or master, it’s almost impossible to please a king as they have a fickle mind like that of a horse. Come to think of it—the mind itself is like a horse¹!

Worldly ambitions and desires are like the distant horizon; the more we try to achieve them the further away they move from us. So it is futile to let this horse (the mind) to run behind them². Remember: life is short and time is limited³. Death and old age are fast creeping upon us and the body is progressively becoming feeble and withered⁴. [We should not therefore waste our time and the ability of the mind in trying to please worldly lords and masters who are nevertheless difficult to please in the first place.]

So what should we do? We should focus our attention and harness the power and energy of the mind to do meditation and observe austerity. There is nothing better for us to do.⁵

[¹A horse never stays quiet, will never stick to one path, and will canter away in some random direction at the first opportunity. So is the case with the mind of kings; they are whimsical by their nature, and no one can be certain of what pleases them and how. The poet is comparing his mind to a king because like the king, the mind is also very powerful and strong, it rules over the person like a king rules over his subjects, it can do anything it wishes; it is also difficult to predict its thoughts, behaviour and the course it would take in spite of one’s best advice to it just like a king behaves; and it is as whimsical and fickle as a king is.

To wit, the poet has two important points to stress here: (i) There is no use in wasting time in trying to please the rich and the mighty as all such efforts come to a naught when they become the least angry or displeased with a person. And (ii) It is equally useless to let the mind loose or depend upon it for one’s welfare because it behaves either like a arrogant king who does what pleases him or like a horse who would run here and there without any objective served, and in the process rock the chariot. In this metaphor, a person’s ‘body’ is a chariot in which his ‘true self’, his soul or Atma rides, and the ‘mind’ is the horse that drives this chariot. If the horse is

allowed to go as it wishes, the chariot will rock left and right as the horse tries to break free and flee in whatever direction it pleases it.

²This stanza can be read as follows also: “We, the ascetics, have higher goals in life; we have an ambition to reach the horizon (symbolising the last frontier of wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment which grants bliss, beatitude, felicity, blessedness, eternity and peace). So if we get bogged down by attempting to fulfil the wishes of our mind, we will be bargaining our lofty ideals of drinking spiritual nectar of bliss and eternity for the juice of the fruit of a tree symbolising this gross perishable world.

³Life is short: refer verse nos. 33, 36, 43-44, 49, 71.

⁴Old age: refer verse nos. 73-74.

⁵Mind is as restless as a horse in this world, always trying to climb higher and higher on the mountain of gross desires and yearnings, hoping for greater respects and higher stature. The mind is like a captive to its own endless desires. But unfortunately, old age is ruining my body. Death, when it eventually comes, will take away everything. Hence, oh friend (“Sakhe”), for a learned and wise man in this world (“Vidusho”), there is nothing more beneficial than doing Tapa (austerity, penance and observing righteous vows) and meditation.]

माने म्लायिनि खण्डिते च वसुनि व्यर्थे प्रयातेऽर्थिनि

क्षीणे बन्धुजने गते परिजने नष्टे शनैर्यावने ।

युक्तं केवलमेतदेव सुधियां यज्जहनुकन्यापयः -

पूतग्रावगिरीन्द्रकन्दरतटीकुञ्जे निवासः क्वचित् ॥ ७८ ॥

(78) mānē mlayini khaṇḍitē ca vasuni vyarthē prayātē'rthini

kṣīṇē bandhujanē gatē parijanē naṣṭē śanairyauvanē ।

yuktam kēvalamētaḍēva sudhiyām yajjahnukanyāpayah -

pūtagrāvagirīndrakandarataṭīkuñjē nivāsaḥ kvacit ॥ 78 ॥

(78) MAANE MLAAYINI KHANDITE CHA VASUNI VYARTHE PRAAYATE- ARTHINI

KSHEENE BANDHUJANE GATE PARIJANE NASHTE SHANAI-YAUVANE /

YUKTAM KEVALMETADEVA SUDHIYAAM YAJJAHANU-

KANYAAPAYAHA -

POOTA-GRAAVA-GIRINDRA-KANDAR-TATEE-KUNJE NIVAASAH KVACHIT//

(78) [The last resort where a Sanyasi or an ascetic should go for peace.]

When his prestige has declined and honour has faded away, when he has lost his wealth and cannot satisfy those who come to him for favours and has to turn them away empty handed, when his friends have deserted him, when his kith and kin, his children and family members have died, and when his youth has given way to old age—that is the time¹ for the wise and erudite to go and live in a cave in the valley of mountains of the Himalayas, in a solitary bower of creepers, at a site purified by and made holy and august by the presence of the river Ganges² flowing in the vicinity. He should do meditation and practice austerity there in this way.

[¹To wit, when a person has entered the fourth and last phase of his life, when he has witnessed and experienced all the miseries and pains of worldly life and has truly developed a sense of renunciation, dispassion and detachment in his inner-self, it the ripe time then to go the serene environment of the mountains in the Himalayas and spend the rest of his days in quietude and peace on the banks of the river Ganges that is a holy river which is believed to have descended from the heaven upon earth.

²River Ganges is also called 'Jahanu-Kanyaa' because of a mythological lore which is brief is this: When the river flowed down the slopes of the mountain on its onward journey through the plains of India, it passed through the hermitage of sage Jahnu and deluged it. The sage was annoyed and drank its water. When the gods pleaded with him to release it, the sage tore the skin of his thigh ("Jahanu") from which the river gushed out. So it came to be known as the 'daughter of Jahnu'. {Kanyaa = daughter.}]

रम्याश्चन्द्रमरीचयस्तृणवती रम्या वनान्तःस्थली
रम्यं साधुसमागमावतसुखं काव्येषु रम्याः कथाः ।
कोपोपाहित बाष्पबिन्दुतरलं रम्यं प्रियाया मुखं
सर्वं रम्यमनित्यतामुपगते चित्ते न किञ्चित्पुनः ॥ ७९॥

(79) ramyāścandramarīcayastrṇavatī ramyā vanāntaḥsthalī
ramyaṁ sādhusamāgamāvatasukhaṁ kāvyēṣu ramyāḥ kathāḥ ।
kōpōpāhita bāṣpabindutaralaṁ ramyaṁ priyāyā mukhaṁ
sarvaṁ ramyamanityatāmupagatē cittē na kiñcitpunah ॥ 79॥

(79) RAMYAASCHANDRA-MAREECHAYA-STRINAWATEE RAMYAA
VANAANTAHA-STHALEE
RAMYAM SAADHUSAMAAGAMAA-VATASUKHAM KAAVYESHU RAMYAAHA
KATHAAHA /
KOPOPAAHITA BAASHPA-BINDU-TARALAM RAMYAM PRIYAAYAA MUKHAM
SARVAM RAMYAM-NITYA-TAAMUPAGATE CHITTE NA KINCHITPUNAHA //

(79) [In verse no. 76, the poet has given three choices to an ascetic. Now he elaborates upon them. He says that the best way to find happiness for the mind and make it feel contented is when one realises that nothing in this material world of sense objects and charms is sustainable, and nothing can compare with the sense of bliss and peace that comes when one realises the transient nature of the objects of these pleasures, and consequentially the futility of such pursuits.]

The rays of the beautiful moon are delightful and enchanting; the verdant green grassland on the outskirts of the forests and villages (i.e. the pleasure gardens of the rich, and the green harvest of the farmer) are delightful and enchanting too; and so is the company of wise and learned men; the poetical narratives of literature are also very delightful to hear and enchanting for the mind and heart; and similar is the delight and enchantment of seeing the face of one's beloved on which drop tears of feigned anger and grief of separation are perched (which makes a man deluded so as that he thinks that the beloved loves him dearly).

Forsooth, all are very delightful and enchanting for the mind, but none of them remains so once the mind realises that everything in this mortal world is transient, temporary and perishable, that everything is subject to decline and decay, that in the end nothing would remain and everything would fade away into the realm of memory (and pages of history). In brief, everything in this mortal world is evanescent.

[This being the case, what is the great idea in pursuing these pleasures and charms? Why not instead pursue meditation, contemplation and austerity that would give sustained and purest form of bliss, beatitude, felicity and blessedness to the mind and the heart?]

रम्यं हर्म्यतलं न किं वसतये श्रव्यं न गेयादिकं
किं वा प्राणसमासमागमसुखं नैवाधिकप्रीतये ।
किंतु भ्रान्तपतङ्गपक्षपवनव्यालोलदीपाङ्कुर -
च्छायाचञ्चलमाकलय्य सकलं सन्तो वनान्तं गताः ॥ ८० ॥

(80) ramyaṁ harmyatalaṁ na kiṁ vasatayē śravyaṁ na gēyādikam
kiṁ vā prāṇasamāsamāgamasukhaṁ naivādhikaprītayē ।
kiṁtu bhrāntapataṅgapakṣapavanavyālōladīpāṅkura -
cchāyācañcalamākalayya sakalaṁ santō vanāntaṁ gatāḥ ॥ 80 ॥

(80) RAMYAM HARMYATALAM NA KIM VASATAYE SRAVYAM NA GEYAADIKAM
KIM VAA PRAAN-SAMAASMAAGAM-SUKHAM NAIVAADHIKA-PREETAYE /
KINTU BHRAANTA-PATANGA-PAKSHA-PAVAN-VYAALOLADI-PAANKUR –
CCHHAAYAA-CHANCHALMAAKALAYYA SAKALAM SANTO VANAANTAM GATAAHA //

(80) [The poet says that one should not think that ascetics have gone to the forest and adopted a life of renunciation because they have failed to achieve material success in life, and so decided to pretend to be a hermit to hide their failures and frustrations. Not at all; for these ascetics had everything that the world had to offer in material terms. They renounced it because they saw through the mist of delusions at the ‘truth’ that lies at the other end.]

These saintly and pious persons had everything in life—comfortable house to live in, pleasures of the world, melodious music to entertain them, and company of lusty females who were at their command to fulfil their wishes. Yet these wise, noble and enlightened souls preferred the life of a forest dweller in comparison to these charms. They regarded these enjoyments of the world to be as transient and fickle as the flickering shadow of a flame that is caused by the wings of a moth fluttering and hovering around it, blinking its light, or the flickering light of a flame that is being buffeted by a gust of wind blowing over it.

[This flame can go out any moment; the moth itself gets burnt in it. Likewise, the ascetic realises that to get indulgent in the sensual pleasures of the world, that look so nice now and boring the other moment, would be consuming his vital energy so much so that at the end he himself will be exhausted and feel burnt out like the moth.

Further, the charms and attractions of the material gross world are like this flame which attracts the moth, only to burn it mercilessly. So likewise a man who gets

tempted by and attracted to the charms of the sense objects of the world too gets scorched and exhausted by the time he realises he has made a terrible mistake of his life, but then it is too late for him.

In this verse, the poet uses a beautiful analogy to explain why ascetics leave everything and go to the forest for engaging themselves in penance and meditation. When an insect who is tempted by the light of the lamp dances around the flame, a time comes when it goes too near the fierce fire of the flame to burn and die. In the process, the flame is also extinguished. Both perish—the insect dies and the light of the lamp vanishes.

Besides this, at the time when the insect was dancing around the flame that is reminiscent of a person courting the sensual pleasures and charms of the world and its objects, the light of the flame was flickering and shaking—implying that these charms and pleasures look very attractive for one moment, and boring and disgusting the other moment. And finally the end-result of this play is ruin for both the concerned person as well as these charms as the former would be consumed and all his energy exhausted by pursuing of these passions, and the latter would fade away into oblivion when old age takes over him.]

आसंसारत्त्रिभुवनमिदं चिन्वतां तात तादृ -
 इनैवास्माकं नयनपदवीं श्रोत्रमार्गं गतो वा ।
 योऽयं धत्ते विषयकरिणीगाढगूढाभिमान -
 क्षीबस्यान्तःकरणकरिणः संयमानायलीलाम् ॥ ८१ ॥

(81) āsaṁsārāṭtribhuvanamidam cinvatām tāta tādr̥ -
 ṛṇaivāsmākaṁ nayanapadavīm śrōtramārgaṁ gatō vā ।
 yō'yaṁ dhattē viṣayakarīṇīgāḍhagūḍhābhimāna -
 kṣībasyāntaḥkaraṇakarīṇaḥ saṁyamānāyalīlām ॥ 81 ॥

(81) AA-SANSAARAATRI-BHUWAN-MIDAM CHINVATAAM TAATA TAADRINGNAI-
 VAASMAKAAM NAYAN-PADAVEEM SROTRAMAARGAM GATO VAA /
 YO-AYAM DHATTE VISHAY-KARINEE-GAADHA-GOODHAA-BHIMAANA –
 KSHEEBASHYAANTAHA-KARNA-KARINAH SANYAMAANAAYA-LEELAAM //

(81) [On the trap laid for the mind by worldly desires that are likened to a female elephant that makes a male elephant mad with desire and passion. The simile used by the poet is remarkable here.]

‘My dear (“Taata”), I have yet to meet a noble and wise person in any of the three mythological worlds (heavens, earth, nether), nor have I heard of anyone who has exercised control over his mind and tamed it sufficiently to be kept tied to the post or pole or stave of self-restraint.

Verily indeed, the male-elephant present hidden in a person in the form of his natural lust, desire, passion and yearning for the sensual pleasures and objects of the world that are like a female elephant, is difficult to control, because a male elephant in a time of its rut becomes so extremely mad with passion and lust when it sees a female elephant that it is well nigh impossible to control it.’

[In this analogy, the human mind is compared to a male elephant in a rut who is sexually aroused, and the sensual pleasures of the material world to a young female elephant. The male elephant rushes madly behind the female elephant, grabs it passionately and has intercourse with it. So likewise, one's mind is also madly after the sensual pleasures of the world, courts these pleasures, enjoys them madly, and gets embraced or trapped by them which is like the male elephant having a passionate intercourse with the female.

Now, a strong and firm post is required by an elephant tamer to bind the male elephant with a chain to it and prevent it from indulging in its mad activities. The person who can control his mind is like wise tamer, and his sense of wisdom, his realisation of the truth, his sagacity and erudition, are the symbolic post or stave with which he can control his wayward mind. The poet says that he has searched the whole world and its three divisions but found not a single person with this ability and wisdom.]

यदेतत्स्वच्छन्दं विहरणमकार्पण्यमशनं
सहार्यैः संवासः श्रुतमुपशमैकव्रतफलम् ।
मनो मन्दस्पन्दं बहिरपि चिरस्यापि विमृशन्
न जाने कस्यैष परिणतिरुदारस्य तपसः ॥ ८२ ॥

(82) yadētatsvacchandaṁ viharaṇamakārpaṇyamāśanaṁ
sahāryaiḥ saṁvāsaḥ śrutamupaśamaikavrataphalam ।
manō mandaspandaṁ bahirapi cirasyāpi vimr̥śan
na jānē kasyaiṣa pariṇatirudārasya tapasaḥ ॥ 82 ॥

(82) YADETA-TSWACCHHANDAM VIHARANA-MAKAARPANYA-MASHANAM
SAHAARYAIIHA SAMWAASAHA SRUTAMUPASHAMAIIKA-VRAT-PHALAM /
MANO MANDASPANDAM BAHIRAPI CHIRSYAAPI VIMRISHAN
NA JAANE KASYAISHA PARINATI-RUDAAARASYA TAPSAHA //

(82) [The poet expresses happiness about the positive and the qualitative features of the present life as an ascetic. He lists them in this verse as follows:-]

What a glorious way of life it is (for an ascetic) indeed. (i) There is the freedom to move about and roam freely wherever one wishes to go (as compared to the many restrictions as a householder or as a king or member of his court). (ii) Food that one gets is free from all encumbrances, obligations, guilt, meanness and taints of sin and corruption; this food is voluntary, and free from greed and the taint of longing (as compared to the seemingly delicious meals of a householder or a king and his noble men who employ so many selfish, greedy, sinful, wicked and exploitative ways to fill their own stomachs). (iii) There is the company and friendship of learned and revered men, brother ascetics, and self-realised and enlightened sages and hermits; it gives true knowledge and wisdom as well spiritual peace and eternal contentedness to the mind and heart (as compared to one's earlier company in the world where only material things were the subjects of discussion and discourse that led to entanglements rather than freedom). (iv) There is peace and bliss all around, an environment that is

conducive to attainment of oneness with the Supreme One that gives eternity and beatitude of the best kind (as opposed to the life in the world where there was constant worry, misery, pain, grief, fear and consternation).

[Considering all these benefits of an ascetic's way of life, the poet muses:-] 'Indeed in all sooth and without any gainsay, I wonder what good penance I had done earlier, what meritorious deed I had done in my previous life that I was fortunate enough to be blessed with this opportunity, that I managed to divert my mind away from the world, cease its involvement with it, and lead a life of renunciation.'

जीर्णा एव मनोरथाश्च हृदये यातं च तद्यौवनं
हन्ताङ्गेषु गुणाश्च वन्ध्यफलतां याता गुणजैर्विना ।
किं युक्तं सहसाभ्युपैति बलवान्कालः कृतान्तोऽक्षमी
हा ज्ञातं मदनान्तकाङ्घ्रियुगलं मुक्त्वास्ति नान्या गतिः ॥ ८३ ॥

(83) jīrṇā ēva manōrathāśca hr̥dayē yātaṁ ca tadyauvanam
hantāṅgēṣu guṇāśca vandhyaphalatām yātā guṇajñairvinā ।
kiṁ yuktaṁ sahasābhyupaiti balavāṅkālah kṛtāntō'kṣamī
hā jñātaṁ madanāntakāṅghriyugalam muktavāsti nānyā gatiḥ ॥ 83 ॥

(83) JIRNAA EVA MANORATHAASHCHA HRIDAYE YAATAM CHA TADYAU-VANAM
HANTAANGESHU GUNAASHCHA BANDHYA-FALATAAM YAATAA GUNA-GYAIRVINAA
/
KIM YUKTAM SAHASAA-BHYUPAITI BALWAANKAALAH KRITAANTO-AKSHMEE
HAA GYAATAM MADANAANTA-KANGHRI-YUGALAM MUKTAVAASTI NAA-NYAA
GATIHA //

(83) [The poet warns a wise person to become alert and renounce the world while still there is time. He also advises those who are undecided about whether or not to assume the life of an ascetic.]

Precious time of my youth was wasted away in fulfilling desires and in search of pleasures that the mind harboured and lusted for in its deep recesses. Youth dissipated and the body became old. All the knowledge, skill and qualities that were so assiduously cultivated by me were of no avail as there was no one to appreciate them. Death is already knocking at my door, ready to pounce upon me.

What is to be done now? I realise that it is only by having devotion for the holy feet of Lord Shiva, who had conquered Kaam (lust, passion and desire), that I can hope to attain liberation and deliverance from this world and its associated torments, delusions and horrors. There is no other way to it. So I take refuge with the Lord and surrender at his holy feet as my only aim in life (or as the only avenue that is open for me).

महेश्वरे वा जगतामधीश्वरे
जनार्दने वा जगदन्तरात्मनि ।

न वस्तुभेदप्रतिपत्तिरस्ति मे
तथापि भक्तिस्तरुणेन्दुशेखरे ॥ ८४ ॥

(84) mahēśvarē vā jagatāmadhīśvarē
janārdanē vā jagadantarātmāni ।
na vastubhēdapratipattirasti mē
tathāpi bhaktistarūṇēnduśēkharē ॥ 84 ॥

(84) MAHESHWARE VAA JAGATAAMA-DHEESHWARE
JANAARDANE VAA JAGADANTA-RAATMANI /
NA VASTUBHED-PRATIPATTIRASTI ME
TATHAAPI BHAKTI-STARUNENDU-SHEKHARE //

(84) ‘Verily indeed and in all sooth, let me clarify that I hold no difference between Lord Shiva who is the Lord of the universe or creation, and Lord Vishnu who is the protector and sustainer of all the creatures as well as is the supreme Soul or the Atma that is the essence of the same universe or creation; I treat them equally and with the same reverence. There is no distinction between them.

But inspite of this, I (i.e. the ‘ascetic’) have devotion for Lord Shiva who wears the crescent moon on his forehead.’

[This verse is of great significance because in the previous verse no. 83 the poet Bhartrihari has said that liberation and deliverance is possible only by having devotion for the holy feet of ‘Lord Shiva’; he is the only Lord with whom one should take refuge. So in this present verse the poet wishes to set the record straight, to preempt any sort of accusations of creating disharmony and schism in the society, and to remove any doubts in the mind of others about what he actually means. He has no intention to cast any irreverence to Lord Vishnu because for a wise and realised ascetic there is uniformity in creation; he knows that the same Supreme Being has taken or assumed different forms or roles to carry out different functions in his creation. So while as Brahma he carries out the function of ‘creation’, as Vishnu he ‘sustains and protects’ this creation, and as Shiva he ‘brings an end to this creation’.

In this virtual system of delegation of duties and delineation of responsibilities, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva act as role models for different phases of life. A householder would worship Lord Vishnu as the Lord inspires him to faithfully carry out his duty and responsibility to take care of his dependants and wards at his individual level just like the Lord takes care of the world at a larger scale. Similarly, Lord Shiva acts as a role model by inspiring an ascetic to conquer his passions and lead a life of true renunciation and detachment as the Lord himself lives.

Lord Shiva ‘brings an end to this creation’ means that he removes all delusions as the latter are ‘creations of the mind’. A worshipper of Lord Shiva is one who conquers his passions and overcomes his delusions first and foremost. Since the advice contained in the verses of this Book ‘Vairagya Shatkam’ is meant for an ascetic who is supposed to have done just this, i.e. has conquered all his delusions pertaining to this world, it is Lord Shiva who ought to be his patron deity in a very logical and natural way.]

स्फुरत्स्फारज्योत्स्नाधवलिततले क्वापि पुलिने
 सुखासीनाः शान्तध्वनिषु रजनीषु द्युसरितः ।
 भवाभोगोदिवग्नाः शिव शिव शिवेत्युच्चवचसः
 कदा यास्यामोऽन्तर्गतबहुलबाष्पाकुलदशाम् ॥ ८५ ॥

(85) sphuratsphārajyōtsnādhavalitatalē kvāpi pulinē
 sukhāsīnāḥ śāntadhvaniṣu rajanīṣu dyusaritaḥ ।
 bhavābhōgōdvignāḥ śiva śiva śivētyuccavacasah
 kadā yāsyāmō'ntargatabahulabāṣpākuladaśām ॥ 85 ॥

(85) SPHURATSPHAARA-JYOTSNA-DHAWALI-TATALE KVAAPI PULINE
 SHUKHAASEENAAHA SHAANTA-DHVANISHU RAJANISHU DYUSARITAH /
 BHAVAA-BHOGO-DVIGNAAHA SHIVA SHIVA SHIVETU-CCHA-VACHASAH
 KADAA YAASYAAMO-ANTARGAT-BHAHUL-BAASHPAA-KUL-DASHAAM //

(85) [The poet describes the ecstatic condition of an ascetic when he has attained the state of extreme bliss during meditation as he chants Shiva-Shiva, when tears of joy and ecstasy well-up and roll down his cheeks. He now is said to exist in state of transcendental existence called Samadhi. In this state, the ascetic becomes one with Shiva who is an embodiment of pure and supreme Consciousness. See also the next verse no. 86.]

While sitting comfortably during the night, somewhere near the banks of the holy river (Ganges), the surface of which glows with a silvery shine from the balm-like light of the moon, when all worldly sounds have ceased and there is complete silence (in the external world), and fearful of the miseries associated with birth and death, when shall I (attain that exalted and sublime state of transcendental existence when I would) spontaneously cry aloud ‘Shiva-Shiva’ in ecstasy, even as copious tears of joy and extreme bliss well-up in my eyes and roll down my cheeks!

[This verse can be read as follows also:- “When will the time come when I, having given up worldly attachments and attractions that have tormented and pained me so much over the years, start chanting the blissful and auspicious name of Shiva repeatedly to alleviate my pain and suffering. I wait for that moment when, sitting on the banks of the holy river Ganges, whose water are silvery under the soothing light of the moon, with all sounds of the world silenced by the calming shroud of the night, with tears of joy running down my eyes, I shall constantly incant ‘Shiva, Shiva’ in total bliss and lost in ecstasy.”]

वितीर्णे सर्वस्वे तरुणकरुणापूर्णहृदयाः
 स्मरन्तः संसारे विगुणपरिणामां विधिगतिम् ।
 वयं पुण्यारण्ये परिणतशरच्चन्द्रकिरणाः
 त्रियामा नेष्यामो हरचरणचिन्तैकशरणाः ॥ ८६ ॥

(86) vitirṇē sarvasvē taruṇakaruṇāpūrṇahrdayāḥ
 smarantaḥ saṁsārē viguṇapariṇāmāṁ vidhigatim ।
 vayam puṇyāraṇyē pariṇataśaraccandrakiraṇāḥ
 triyāmā nēṣyāmō haracaraṇacintaikaśaraṇāḥ ॥ 86 ॥

(86) VITEERNE SARVASWE TARUN-KARUNAA-POORNA-HRIDAYAAHA
 SMARANTAHA SANSAARE VIGUNA-PARINAAMAAM VIDHI-GATIM /
 VAYAM PUNYAARANYE PARINAT-SHARCCHANDRA-KIRANAAHA
 TRIYAAMAA NESHYAAMO HARACHARANA-CHINTAIKA-SHARANAHA //

(86) [The poet wonders when he will spend his time meditating on Shiva on moonlit nights in forests where he won't be disturbed by worldly turmoil where he wishes to retire after distributing, with a compassion-filled heart, all his possessions to the needy, and forgetting the past unhappiness of his mundane world. Refer also to the previous verse no. 85.]

‘I look forward to the time when I would have renounced all material things and the attachments that I have with them; when I, full of the milk of human kindness and keeping in view the evil, deceitful and pervert ways of the world, spend my time and days in the worship of the lotus feet of Lord Shiva who is the supreme Ascetic and an embodiment of the supreme Consciousness, the ‘Self’. I long for the moment, when by the Lord’s blessings, I live in a sacred forest (away from the world), marvelling at the sublime beauty and the magnificence of the autumn nights illuminated by the glow of the full moon. [Indeed truly, what an exhilarating and divine sight would it be; I long for that time and day when I would be fortunate to witness it.]’

कदा वाराणस्याममरतटिनीरोधसि वसन्
 वसानः कौपीनं शिरसि निदधानोऽञ्जलिपुटम् ।
 अये गौरीनाथ त्रिपुरहरशम्भो त्रिनयन
 प्रसीदेति क्रोशन्निमिषमिव नेष्यामि दिवसान् ॥ ८७ ॥

(87) kadā vārāṇasyāmamarataṭinīrōdhasi vasan
 vasānaḥ kaupīnaṁ śirasi nidadhānō'ñjalipuṭam ।
 ayē gaurīnātha tripuraharaśambhō trinayana
 prasīdēti krōśannimiṣamiva nēṣyāmi divasān ॥ 87 ॥

(87) KADAA VAARAANASYAAM-MARTA-TINEERODHASI VASAN
 NASAANAHA KAUPREENAHA SHIRASI NIDADHAANO-ANJALI-PUTAM /
 AYE GAUREENAATHA TRIPURA-HAR-SHAMBHO TRINAYANA
 PRASEEDETI KROSHANNIMISHAMIVA NESHYAAMI DIWASAAN //

(87) [The poet longs for that day when he will be lost in doing meditation and in the thoughts of Lord Shiva.]

‘When shall I live in the holy city of Varanasi, considered to be an auspicious place which provides liberation from the cycle of birth and death to those who die there, on the banks of the holy river Ganges, wearing rags (to imply that I am a true ascetic with no worldly possessions that may drag me away from complete renunciation), offering worship to Lord Shiva with my hands held above my head and their palms touching each other as a posture of prayer, and calling out to Lord Shiva in a loud voice in a state of ecstasy—“Oh Gaurinaatha (i.e. the Lord of goddess Gauri or Parvati or Uma), Oh Lord Tripurari (i.e. the Lord who had vanquished the demon Tripura), Oh Lord Har (i.e. the Lord who steals all ignorance and delusions), Oh Lord Shambhu (i.e. the Lord who does all good), Oh Lord Trinayana (i.e. the Lord with three eyes; two conventional and one at the centre of the forehead, said to be the eye symbolic of wisdom, self-realisation and enlightenment).

Oh Lord, have mercy on me, protect me, save me (“Pra-see-the-te”)!
I wonder when shall I pass all my days and nights in this way?’

स्नात्वा गाङ्गैः पयोभिः शुचिकुसुमफलैरर्चयित्वा विभो त्वां
ध्येये ध्यानं निवेश्य क्षितिधरकुहरग्रावपर्यङ्कमूले ।
आत्मारामः फलाशी गुरुवचनरतस्त्वत्प्रसादात्स्मरारे
दुःखं मोक्षये कदाहं समकरचरणे पुंसि सेवासमुत्थम् ॥ ८८ ॥

(88) snātvā gāṅgaiḥ payōbhiḥ śucikusumaphalairarcayitvā vibhō tvāṁ
dhyēyē dhyānam nivēśya kṣitidharakuharagrāvaparyāṅkamūlē ।
ātmārāmaḥ phalāśī guruvacanaratastvatprasādātsmarārē
duḥkham mōkṣyē kadāham samakaracaraṇe puṁsi sēvāsamuttham ॥ 88 ॥

(88) SNAATWAA GAANGAIHA PAYOBHIHA SHUCHI-KUSUM-PHALAIRRCHAYETWAA
VIBHO TWAAM
DHYE-YE DHYAANAM NIVESHYA KSHITIDHAR-KUHAR-GRAAVAPARYANKA-MOOLE /
AATMAA-RAAMAHA PHALAASHEE GURU-VACHAN-RATASTWATPRASAADAA-
TSMARAARE
DUKKHAM MOKSHYE KADAAHAM SAM-KARA-CHARANE PUNSI SEVAASMUTHAM //

(88) ‘I have taken a bath in the waters of the holy river Ganges. I drink sweet drinks. I offer beautiful flower to worship ‘Vibho’ (the one who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, eternal, infinite Lord; i.e. Lord Shiva) while sitting on a stone in a cave below a mountain. I devote my entire concentration on the holy feet of the Lord (Shiva), which is worthy of worship and having devotion for, with no expectation of any blessing or boon for myself.

I shall get the divine fruit in the form of bliss that comes with realisation of my pure self (known as the Atma which is pure consciousness and an image of Lord Shiva) by the advice given to me by my learned moral advisor (known as a Guru).

Oh Lord! When shall I attain liberation and deliverance from my sorrows even as I have surrendered before you and meditate upon your holy feet in an eternal state of bliss and ecstasy? When shall I free myself from the grief of slavery of others and the misery of bondage to them (i.e. worldly people), and instead serve you?’

एकाकी निःस्पृहः शान्तः पाणिपात्रो दिगम्बरः ।
कदा शम्भो भविष्यामि कर्मनिर्मूलनक्षमा ॥ ८९॥

(89) ēkāki niḥspr̥haḥ śāntaḥ pāṇipātrō digambaraḥ ।
kadā śambhō bhaviṣyāmi karmanirmūlanakṣamā ॥ 89॥

(89) EKAKEE NIHASPRIHAHA SHAANTAHA PAANIPAATRO DIGAMBARAHA /
KADAA SHAMBHO BHAVISHYAAMI KARMANIRMOOLA-NAKSHAMAA //

(89) Oh Lord Shambho (Shiva)! When will I live alone, free from all encumbrances, attachments and desires, absolutely calm and peaceful, with only my hands to serve as a cup or plate to receive food to eat, have the sky (or the four directions) as my only cloth (or cover), and in this way be able to do root out all the effects of my past deeds (pertaining to my previous life as well as since the time I was born in this life).

[The poet prays to Lord Shiva to bless him and wishes that he lives a life of complete and total renunciation, detachment and non-involvement with the world so that he is able to finish-off or dissipate whatever remnants of consequences of his past deeds, both from his previous life as well as his present life since his birth, that are still left to be suffered or borne by him, and to ensure that no new burden of deeds is accumulated and carried forward for future as he would ensure not allow to himself to be involved in anything related to this gross world that may act as a spiritual drag on his chances for attaining final liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, and obtaining emancipation and salvation for his soul.

This verse, in effect, tells us about the way a true Sanyasi, i.e. a person who has renounced the world and everything related to it while he prepares the ground for his emancipation and salvation, should live his life. Refer also to verse nos. 85-88 herein above and verse no. 90 herein below.]

पाणिं पात्रयतां निसर्गशुचिना भैक्षेण संतुष्यतां
यत्र क्वापि निषीदतां बहुतृणं विश्वं मुहुः पश्यताम् ॥
अत्यागीऽपि तनोरखण्डपरमानन्दावबोधस्पृशां
अध्वा कोऽपि शिवप्रसादसुलभः सम्पत्स्यते योगिनाम् ॥ ९०॥

(90) pāṇim pātrayatām nisargaśucinā bhaikṣeṇa saṁtuṣyatām
yatra kvāpi niṣīdatām bahutr̥ṇam viśvaṁ muhuḥ paśyatām ॥
atyāgī'pi tanōrakhaṇḍaparamānandāvabōdhaspr̥śām
adhvā kō'pi śivaprasādasulabhaḥ sampatsyate yōginām ॥ 90॥

(90) PAANIM PAATRAYATAAM NISARGA-SHUCHINAA BHAIKSHENA ANTUSHYATAAM
YATRA KVAAPI NISHEEDATAAM BHUTRINAM VISHWAM MUHUHA PASHYTAAM /

ATYAAGEE-API TANORAKHANDA-PARMAANANDAABA-BODHA-SPRISHAAM
ADHVAA KO-API SHIVA-PRASAAD-SULABHHA SAMPATSYATE YOGINAAM //

(90) [This verse continues with the ideas expressed in previous verse no. 89. It tells of the eclectic reward that is available to an ascetic who follows the path of true renunciation. He can then experience the supreme bliss that comes with Brahm-realisation, which is called here ‘Shiva-realisation’ as Shiva is a personified form of the Supreme Consciousness that Brahm stands for, even while he is alive, i.e. even before leaving his mortal body to attain emancipation and salvation, or being united with the Supreme One.]

Those who use their hands as cups or plates to eat from (because they do not hoard food nor have any physical possessions such as utensils with them), who are contented with whatever is available to eat by begging because such food is deemed to be uncontaminated (as it is got with total dispassion, as a gracious gift from Lord Shiva, and without any worldly involvement of any kind to procure or prepare it), who cheerfully lie down to rest anywhere (i.e. who do not feel the need of a bed or home to rest), who regard the world as being useless, inconsequential and petty as a blade of grass—verily indeed, such ascetics (“Yogis”) experience an uninterrupted sense of supreme bliss even before giving up their mortal coil (i.e. as long as they live, they live a life submerged in a blissful state of existence that is marked by a feeling of blessedness and beatitude), and upon death the path that makes oneness with Shiva, the Supreme One, possible, becomes very easy for them (i.e. when they die, they attain emancipation and salvation of their soul).

[To wit, what a blessed life do they have! They have rewards or fruits in both their hands: while they are alive they enjoy bliss and peace in their lives as they have freed themselves from all the fears of worries and miseries associated with mundane life in this gross mortal and material world, and when they die they attain beatitude and felicity for themselves by the virtue of attaining emancipation and salvation for their souls which would free them from the cycle of birth and death. What better, what else would anyone want?

Obviously, once they begin to enjoy the spiritual rewards or fruits of renunciation, all the charms and attractions of the material world begin to appear like “useless blades of grass” to them, superficial, hollow and worthless.]

कौपीनं शतखण्डजर्जरतरं कन्था पुनस्तादृशी
नैश्चिन्त्यं निरपेक्षभैक्षमशनं निद्रा श्मशाने वने ।
स्वातन्त्र्येण निरङ्कुशं विहरणं स्वान्तं प्रशान्तं सदा
स्थैर्यं योगमहोत्सवेऽपि च यदि त्रैलोक्यराज्येन किम् ॥ ९१ ॥

(91) kaupīnam śatakhaṇḍajarjarataram kanthā punastādr̥śī
naiścintyam nirapēkṣabhaikṣamaśanam nidrā śmaśānē vanē ।
svātantryeṇa niraṅkuśam viharanam svāntam praśāntam sadā
sthairyam yōgamahōtsavē'pi ca yadi trailōkyarājyēna kim ॥ 91 ॥

(91) KAUPPEENAM SHATAKANDA-JARJAR-TARAM KANTHAA PUNASTAA-DRISHEE

NAISHINTYAM NIPEKSHA-BHAIKSHAMASHNAM NIDRAA SHMASHAANE VANE /
SWAATANTREYENA NIRANKUSHAM VIHARANAM SWAANTAM PRASHAANTAM SADAA
STHAIRYAM YOGAMAHOTSAVE-API CHA YADI TRAILOKYA-RAAJYEN KIM //

(91) [Once again, more is described here about the blessed life of an ascetic. Even though he has nothing to wear except tattered clothes, little to eat except what he gets by way of begging, no proper bed to sleep upon, and a life spent in wandering, he still feels a surge of joy and bliss overwhelming him. Then he realises that this life of blessedness and carefreeness, a life free from worldly worries, miseries, torments, fears, consternations and entanglements that an ascetic enjoys, is thousands of times better than the sovereignty of the whole world.]

A Yogi (an ascetic, a renunciate Sanyasi) who has attained supreme happiness even though he wears a loin cloth and a loose upper garment made of tattered rags, who lives a life without worries and entanglements, who happily subsists on frugal meals received as alms or charity without asking, who lives cheerfully and comfortably in a forest or even near a cremation ground, for whom friend and foe are equal, and who lives alone in a secluded place with all delusions and attachments destroyed, making his mind calm and peaceful, poised and stable—verily indeed and without any gainsay, such an ascetic would have experienced the sublime form of bliss and beatitude that comes with realisation of the Supreme Self that is nothing but pure cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm (i.e. the ascetic attains oneness with the Supreme One, becomes one with the Supreme Being). There is no doubt about it.

So therefore, when one is enjoying the festive joy of Yoga¹ (meditation and contemplation that leads to attainment of supreme bliss and oneness with the cosmic Consciousness), then say what use for him is the lordship of the whole world consisting of three divisions?

[¹The word ‘Yoga’ itself means ‘union between two entities’. Here the two entities that are merged as a result of meditation are the individual ‘self’ and the cosmic ‘Self’; the individual ascetic and the Supreme Being.]

ब्रह्माण्डं मण्डलीमात्रं किं लोभाय मनस्विनः ।

शफरीस्फुरितेनाब्धिः क्षुब्धो न खलु जायते ॥ ९२॥

(92) brahmāṇḍaṁ maṇḍalīmātraṁ kiṁ lōbhāya manasvinaḥ ।

śapharīsphuritēnābdhiḥ kṣubdhō na khalu jāyatē ॥ 92 ॥

(92) BRAHMAANDA MANDALEEMAATRAM KIM LOBHAAYA MANASWINAHA /
SHAFREE-SFURITENAABDHIHA KSHUBHDHO NA KHALU JAAYATE //

(92) [On the conquest of the mind.] Can this entire universe, with its countless sensual attractions and enchantments, ever tempt a man who has conquered his mind and is wise, erudite and enlightened (because he knows that it is an illusion and an imaginary thing like any reflection in the water) just like the case of an ocean that is not at all affected by the movement of the fish living in it, for it always remain undisturbed by the frolicking, jumping and dancing of the countless fish present in it.

[The ocean is not at all agitated by the movement of countless fish and other marine creatures present in it. Similarly, the mind of a wise and enlightened ascetic remains steadily calm and unruffled by the myriads of inputs from this tumultuous world.

Just as a tiny fish or even a gigantic whale does not cause the ocean to heave and sway, the mind of a wise man too remains calm and steady no matter how great the temptation or adversity that he encounters in the world is.]

मातर्लक्ष्मि भजस्व कंचिदपरं मत्काङ्क्षिणी मा स्म भूः
भोगेषु स्पृहालवस्तव वशे का निःस्पृहाणामसि ।
सद्यःस्यूतपलाशपत्रपुटिकापात्रे पवित्रीकृतै -
र्भिक्षावस्तुभिरेव सम्प्रति वयं वृत्तिं समीहामहे ॥ ९३ ॥

(93) mātārlakṣmi bhajasva kaṁcidaparaṁ matkāṅkṣiṇī mā sma bhūḥ
bhōgēṣu spr̥hayālavastava vaśē kā niḥspr̥hāṇāmasi ।
sadyaḥsyūtapalāśapatrapuṭikāpātrē pavitrīkr̥tai -
rbhikṣāvastubhirēva samprati vayaṁ vṛttim samīhāmahē ॥ 93 ॥

(93) MAATARLAKSHMI BHAJASWA KANCHIDAPARAM MATKAANGKSHANEE MAA
SMA BHUHA
BHOGESHU SPRIHAYAALAVASTAWA VASHE KAA NISPRI-HAANAAMASI /
SADYAHA-SYOOTAPALAASH-PATRA-PUTIKAA-PAATRE PAVITRIKRETAI –
RBHIKSHAA-VASTU-BHIREVA SAMPRATI VAYAM VRITTIM SAMEEHAAMAHE //

(93) [The poet addresses goddess Laxmi, the diety of wealth, and asks her to leave him alone for he is not at all interested in her.]

Oh Goddess Laxmi! Go and find someone else to stay with and don't bother me in the false hope that I shall enjoy your company. I'm no longer interested in indulging in the riches of the world. [To wit, I have no interest in having wealth and prosperity, so you need not bother yourself about me.]

I think you are also not interested in such men (who are not interested in you). I only desire to get along with frugal meals that I get as alms in a bowl made of fresh leaves of the Palash plant (the forest plant known as the 'flame of the forest' which has bright red flowers) as and when I feel hungry.

[The poet says that he has no needs and desires, so he does not want to appease the goddess of wealth. He is contented with whatever he gets, even his basic needs of food are very simple, and so there is no need for him to hanker after wealth.]

महाशय्या पृथ्वी विपुलमुपधानं भुजलता
वितानं चाकाशं व्यजनमनुकूलोऽयमनिलः ।
शरच्चन्द्रो दीपो विरतिवनितासङ्गमुदितः
सुखी शान्तः शेते मुनिरतनुभूतिनृप इव ॥ ९४ ॥

(94) mahāśayyā pr̥thvī vipulamupadhānam bhujalatā
 vitānam cākāśam vyajanamanukūlō'yamanilah |
 śaraccandrō dīpō virativanitāsaṅgamuditaḥ
 sukhī śāntaḥ śētē muniratanubhūtinrpa iva || 94 ||

(94) MAHAASHAYYAA PRITHVEE VIPUL-MUPADHAANAM BHUJA-LATAA
 VITAANAM CHAAKAASHAM VYAJAN-MANUKOOL-AYAMANILAH /
 SHARACCHNDRO DEEPO VIRATIVANITAA-SANGA-MUDITAH
 SUKHI SHAANTAH SHETE MUNIRATANU-BHOOTI-NRIPA EVA //

(94) [Verse nos. 94-95 describe the rare and eclectic qualities of a true ascetic or a true Sanyasi]

A true renunciate ascetic (or a Sanyasi) is a pious, holy and saintly man who sleeps on a comfortable bed of mother earth with his arm, made thin like a creeper, as a pillow, the sky as the canopy over his bed, the cool breeze as a fan to give him comfort, the beautifully resplendent moon as his night-lamp, and in this state of bliss he is at peace with himself. He lives happily his days as a Sanyasi just like those days that he had spent with an enchanting wife as a householder. Indeed, he lives his life in undiminished glory as an ascetic just as happily and cheerfully as if he were a great emperor with all the worldly comforts and pleasures of life available to him.

[An ascetic has, as his constant companion, his 'Atma', his soul, just as he had a wife at home. Again, like an emperor who has all the things he desires and wants nothing from anyone, an ascetic feels fully contented and wants nothing from anyone.]

भिक्षाशी जनमध्यसङ्गरहितः स्वायत्तचेष्टः सदा
 हानादानविरक्तमार्गनिरतः कश्चित्तपस्वी स्थितः ।
 रथ्याकीर्णविशीर्णजीर्णवसनः सम्प्राप्तकन्थासनो
 निर्मानो निरहंकृतिः शमसुखाभोगैकबद्धस्पृहः ॥ ९५ ॥

(95) bhikṣāśī janamadhyasaṅgarahitaḥ svāyattacēṣṭaḥ sadā
 hānādānaviraktamārganirataḥ kaścittapasvī sthitaḥ |
 rathyākīrṇaviśīrṇajīrṇavasanaḥ samprāptakanthāsanō
 nirmānō niraham̐kr̥tiḥ śamasukhābhōgaikabaddhaspr̥haḥ || 95 ||

(95) BHIKSHAASHEE JANMADHYA-SANGA-RAHITAH
 SWAAYATTA-CHESHTAH SADAA
 HAANAADAANA-VIRAKTA-MARGA-NIRATAHA KASHCHI-TTAPASVEE STITHAH /
 RATHYAAKEERNA-VISHEERNA-JEERNA-VASANAHA SAMPRAAPTA-KANTHAASANO
 NIRMAANO NIRAHANKRITIHA SHAMSUKHAA-BHOGAI-KABADDHA-SPRIHA //

(95) [The rare and eclectic qualities of a true ascetic or a true Sanyasi. Refer verse no. 94 also.]

It's rare to find a person (here meaning an ascetic) who subsists on alms got without asking (i.e. he just accepts whatever food or clothes comes his way, treating them as a gift from Lord God), who lives in alone, unattached to and away from any kind of society or company (for he treats his Atma or his pure conscious 'self' as his only friend and companion)¹, who feels free to do what he wishes (i.e. who heeds the call of his inner-self, his conscience, and acts accordingly, and is not under any obligation or compulsion of others), who practices exemplary detachment and dispassion as to what is to be accepted and what is to be given up (i.e. he remains indifferent to every material thing of this world; he is not bothered if he is robbed even of his meagre belongings, nor if he is given something though he did not ask for it)², who wears rags discarded by others and found on streets (as this trains him to be humble, ego-less, indifferent to external appearances, and non-possessive; he does not ask anyone for clothes to cover himself), who sits on any random piece of torn and tattered blanket found by chance (just like the rags he wears), who is devoid of any trace of egoism and pride, and whose only concern is to pursue the eternal fount of happiness and contentedness arising out of control of the mind and its waywardness (as this helps him to focus on the bliss attained by self-realisation and Brahm-realisation, which essentially means attaining a state of oneness with the pure cosmic Consciousness).

[To wit, these observances are his Tapa (austerity and penance) that prepares him for the spiritual reward that Tapa brings to anyone who practices them. Such an ascetic is like a King or an Emperor among ascetics.

¹This statement has another interpretation as follows: “—who lives in the middle of people, but it is just for the sake of receiving food as alms for subsistence, because otherwise he has no attachments and links with any of those people—”

²This statement has another interpretation as follows: “—who adheres to a path of abhorrence of giving and taking things from anyone—”]

चण्डालः किमयं द्विजातिरथवा शूद्रोऽथ किं तापसः

किं वा तत्त्वविवेकपेशलमतिर्योगीश्वरः कोऽपि किम् ।

इत्युत्पन्नविकल्पजल्पमुखरैराभाष्यमाणा जनैः

न क्रुद्धाः पथि नैव तुष्टमनसो यान्ति स्वयं योगिनः ॥ ९६ ॥

(96) caṇḍālaḥ kimayaṁ dvijātirathavā śūdrō'tha kiṁ tāpasah

kiṁ vā tattvavivēkapēśalamatiryōgīśvaraḥ kō'pi kim ।

ityutpannavikalpajalpamukharairābhāṣyamāṇā janaiḥ

na kruddhāḥ pathi naiva tuṣṭamanasō yānti svayaṁ yōginaḥ ॥ 96 ॥

(96) CHANDAALAH KIMAYAM DVIJAATIRATHAWAA SHOODRO-ATHA KIM TAAPASAH

KIM VAA TATTWAVIVEKA-PESHALAMATIRYOGEEESHWARAHA KO-API KIM /

ETYUTPANNA-VIKALPA-JALPA-MUKARIRAA-BHAASHYAMAANAA JANAIHA

NA KRUDDHAAHA PATHI NAIVA TUSHTA-MANASO YAANTI SWAYAM YOGINAH //

(96) When people, those are wise and knowledgeable as well as the laity and the ignorant, see an ascetic, they are awestruck, charmed and vexed by his enigmatic and mysterious personality, by his mannerism and external appearances which present quite an extraordinary and perplexing sight to the beholder. They begin to wonder who this unique person is (for though he is clothed in rags and seems extremely humble and downtrodden, he exudes an aura of authority, divinity, piety and holiness about him that is very rare to have). So they begin asking questions amongst themselves about this rare and mystical person, as well as directly enquiring from the ascetic about his identity, his vocation, his antecedents, and the object of his quest for which he has left home and wonders in the world, thus expressing their doubts and showing their ignorance about him with these questions. [The ascetic, however, is not bothered about impertinent and useless questions put to him by inquisitive but innocent people, and he just smiles and moves on.]

They wonder ‘Who is he? Is he a Chandaal or a Shudra (i.e. of a low caste); or is he a member of any one of the other castes (such as Vaishya, a Kshatriya and a Brahmin)?¹

Is he a hermit or a sage who is engaged in doing Tapa (austerity and penance)?

They wonder if he is a person who has renounced the world in the search of the ‘Truth’; one who practices meditation and contemplation in this search?

They ponder if he is not a person who has realised as well as understood the real essence of existence so much so that he has become highly wise and enlightened, self-realised enough to attain oneness with the pure cosmic Consciousness known as the supreme Self or the Supreme Being known as Ishwar.

A true ascetic should not get annoyed at this enquiry made out of ignorance, nor does he feel important or proud (that people are attracted and showing respect to him). In all sooth, the ascetic is happy with his chosen path and continues to walk over it freely and cheerfully, unbothered about what people are saying about him, for he is deemed to have risen above such mundane worldly matters, such worldly classifications and categorisations (as implied by these questions) that ordinary folks use to judge any person (because he is beyond ‘judgement’ and ‘comprehension’; he has reached a state of ‘transcendental existence’ where such gross and mundane things become irrelevant).

[When an ascetic passes through a village or hamlet, people gather around him and wish to know more about him, for he has such a magnetic personality that his mere presence arouses immense curiosity among the lay people. Surely, they think, he is not an ordinary person who roams aimlessly here and there like a vagabond or a journeyman, nor is he an ordinary beggar, or someone who has run away or has been cast out of his home.

Verily indeed and forsooth, the ascetic surely has such an air of enigma and mystery about him that is so extraordinarily charming and attractive that it ignites the soul of other people who come in contact with him in the same way as a strong wind kindles a latent fire in a heap of smouldering wood, or a magnet placed amongst smaller iron pieces pulls the latter towards itself.

Surely indeed, hundreds and thousands of travellers must have passed on this path down the ages, all through the countless millinia, but they did not cast the sort of charm of divinity and holiness upon the people that the ascetic casts!]

[¹There are four castes in the society according to Hinduism. They are the “Brahmins” who are at top end of this hierarchy and are principally ordained to act as teachers and moral guides; the “Kshatriyas” who are at the second rung and are tasked with the job of protecting the rest of the society from physical danger from enemies,

and maintain the rule of law and order through the rank and file of society; the “Vaishyas” who are assigned the task of looking after the material and financial affairs of the society; and the “Shudras” who are required to serve the rest of the members of the society so that they are freed to carry on their assigned duties as outlined above.

The “Chandaals” are at the lowest rung, and are usually assigned the task of carrying out the last rites of a dead person. They live outside villages. Since they deal with dead bodies, they also perform some other jobs that no one else would be willing to do—such as skinning of dead animals and using their hides for use, such as making shoes and covers for war-shields etc.; they work in tanneries, as butchers and as cobblers.]

हिंसाशून्यमयत्नलभ्यमशनं धात्रा मरुत्कल्पितं

व्यालानां पशवस्तृणाङ्कुरभुजस्तुष्टाः स्थलीशायिनः ।

संसारार्णवलङ्घनक्षमधियां वृत्तिः कृता सा नृणां

तामन्वेषयतां प्रयान्ति सततं सर्वे समाप्तिं गुणाः ॥ ९७ ॥

(97) hiṁsāsūnyamayatnalabhyamaśanam dhātrā marutkalpitam
vyālānām paśavastrṇāṅkurabhujastuṣṭāḥ sthālīśāyinaḥ ।
saṁsārārṇavalaṅghanakṣamadhiyām vṛttiḥ kṛtā sā nrṇām
tāmanvēṣayatām prayānti satatam sarvā samāptim guṇāḥ ॥ 97 ॥

(97) HINSAA-SHOONYA-MAYATNALA-BHYAMASHANAM DHAATRAA
MARUT-KALPITAM
VYAALAANAAM PASHAVASTRINAANKUR-BHUJ-STUSHTAAHA
STHALEE-SHAAYINAH /
SANSARAARNA-VALANGHAN-KSHAMDHIYAAM VRITIHA KRITAA SAA NRINAAM
TAAMANVE-SHAYATAAM PRAYAANTI SATATAM SARVEM SAMAAPTIM GUNAAHA //

(97) [The poet highlights the magnanimity of the Creator and says that when he created the creature and the creation, he had ensured that all are provided with food for their sustenance, but it was done so wisely that no one creature would become a source of fear for the other; no one would need to harm others to feed himself. To wit, the Creator had not envisioned a creation where there would be violence for the sake of food. Nor did he planned that one would sacrifice his principles and demean his soul just for the sake of his basic needs of food, shelter etc. The poet cites some instances to put forward his views.]

An ascetic leads a life free from all violence; he abhors violence of all sorts.

A serpent can stay alive merely on air¹. The cow finds comfortable rest on bare earth to serve it as its bed, and it has an abundant supply of green grass to graze (feed) upon. Both of them are contented and happy though they have a very low level of mental (intellectual) development (as compared to humans).

But it is so ironic and painful to think that though the Creator bestowed upon human beings intellect and wisdom, the ability to think, to discriminate between the

right and the wrong, and to judge what is good or not for themselves, still the human being acts so imprudently and so recklessly that he has thrown all caution to the wind, has become pervert and evil, and has degraded himself, compromised on his morality and principles, and has stooped to such an extremely low level of existence and behaviour that even the animals have been able to avoid!

In this pathetic scenario, the ascetic is indeed very fortunate that he manages to transcend this sorrowful state of affairs and remain free from all taints, corruptions and contaminations. To ensure this, an ascetic feeds himself with food obtained as alms without specifically asking for it. [To wit, the ascetic accepts food that is given to him voluntarily; he accepts it as a gift from Lord Shiva; he is not attached to the giver but treats the latter as a personified form of Shiva who is there to feed him. So this food is holy and uncontaminated. It is a sort of sanctified food obtained freely and without compromising on principles.]

In this way, the ascetic lives happily and joyously with whatever the Creator has given him (without asking or expecting for more, just like the snake and the cow cited herein above). This gives him bliss and contentedness as he has the time to focus on Brahm-realisation (instead of spending his time and energy fulfilling his never-ending desires).

This exalted state of tranquillity and bliss implies that all his agitations caused by disharmony between the various Gunas have ceased; all his Gunas have been neutralised by cancelling each other out. And so he has attained the state of blessedness and beatitude.

[There are said to be three basic qualities in a creature that control all his thought processes. They are Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. The first gives calmness and is conducive to self-realisation and noble characters; the last is the worst of the Gunas and creates disharmony, agitations, passions, restlessness and the like. The second Guna occupies a middle place between the two extremes. By practicing Tapa and Yoga (austerity, penance, contemplation and meditation) the ascetic manages to bring about uniformity of the mind and establish equilibrium between these three Gunas so much so that they cancel each other out. This obviously eliminates all agitations and upheavals that are caused because of different tugs and pulls exerted upon the ascetic by the inherent nature of these three Gunas.]

[It ought to be noted here that in ancient times it was believed that serpents eat nothing but air that they soaked through their skin or mouth. The reason is that they usually lived underground, in holes, or hidden from view in undergrowth of shrubs and creepers. They were nocturnal creatures, and so no one actually saw them foraging for food in the open like other animals. So this belief took root. However, for our purpose we must see what philosophical idea the verse intends to convey rather than becoming too sceptical about the scientific value of its instances—for remember that this book is not a text book on zoology or botany or any branch of material science, but a book on spiritual wisdom and philosophy of the transcendental world of pure cosmic consciousness that goes much and far beyond the knowledge of the gross mortal world that science limits itself to.]

गङ्गातीरे हिमगिरिशिलाबद्धपद्मासनस्य
ब्रह्मध्यानाभ्यसनविधिना योगनिद्रां गतस्य ।
किं तैर्भाव्यं मम सुदिवसैर्यत्र ते निर्विशङ्काः

कण्डूयन्ते जरठहरिणाः स्वाङ्गमङ्गे मदीये ॥ ९८ ॥

(90) gaṅgātīrē himagiriśilābaddhapadmāsanasya
brahmadhyānābhyasanavidhinā yōganidrām gatasya ।
kiṁ tairbhāvyam mama sudivasairyatra tē nirviśaṅkāḥ
kaṇḍūyantē jaraṭṭhahariṇāḥ svāṅgamaṅgē madīyē ॥ 98 ॥

(98) GANGAA-TEERE HIMGIRISHILAA-BADDHA-PADMAASANASYA
BRAHM-DHYAANAA-BHYASAN-VIDHINAA YOGINDRAAM GATASYA /
KIM TAIRBHAAWYAM MAMA SUDIVASAIRYATRA TE NIRVISHANKAAHA
KANDOOYANTE JARATHA-HARINAAHA SWAANGA-MANGE MADEEYE //

(98) [On the life of a Sanyasi or an ascetic. Refer verse no. 99 herein below also.]

‘I wait eagerly for that moment when I would sit in Padmasan (a lotus like sitting posture during Yoga) on a rock in the snow covered Himalayas (Himgiri) on the banks of the holy river Ganges, contemplating on the supreme Being (Brahm)¹. Then, I shall be lost in a meditative trance (Samadhi, called Yog Nidra). I shall be so unconcerned and oblivious of the surroundings that the aged antler, who would be roaming freely in the forest, would poke me with its horns without fear.

After making diligent and persistent efforts in accordance with the prescribed meditation (Yoga) methods and techniques, I shall submerge myself in the deep and relaxed mental state achieved by great Yogis (ascetics) wherein all external senses and their experiences are no longer relevant.’²

[¹Refer also to verse nos. 24, 64, 76, 78, 85, 87 and 88 in this context.]

²This verse marks the climax in the life of any ascetic. The poet longs: “When will the golden days come when I would be sitting in a lotus posture on a stone slab at the banks of the holy river Ganges, immersing myself in a transcendental state of existence which bestows bliss and ecstasy because it establishes a union between the individual ‘self’ and the ‘cosmic Self’. Verily indeed, I would be so lost in meditation that the forest deer would be free from fear from me, and I would be so motionless that it would come close and rub its itching body against my immobile body without my being aware of it. For in all sooth and without gainsay, truly this state of bliss is like a man who sleeps calmly in deep sleep when he is totally unaware of the external world as well as not disturbed by any kind of dream as he sleeps.”]

पाणिः पात्रं पवित्रं भ्रमणपरिगतं भैक्षमक्षय्यमन्नं
विस्तीर्णं वस्त्रमाशादशकमचपलं तल्पमस्वलपमुर्वी ।
येषां निःसङ्गताङ्गीकरण परिणतस्वान्तसंतोषिणस्ते
धन्याः संन्यस्तदैन्यव्यतिकरनिकराः कर्म निर्मूलयन्ति ॥ ९९ ॥

(99) pāṇiḥ pātram pavitram bhramaṇaparigataṁ bhaikṣamakṣayyamannam
vistīrṇam vastramāśādaśakamacapalam talpamasvalpamurvī ।
yēṣāṁ niḥsaṅgatāṅgīkaraṇa pariṇatasvāntasamtōṣiṇastē
dhanyāḥ saṁnyastadainyavyatikaranikarāḥ karma nirmūlayanti ॥ 99 ॥

(99) PAANIHA PAATRAM PAVITRAM BHRAMAN-PARIGATAM
 BHAIKSHAM-KSHAYYAMANNAM
 VISTEERNAM VASTRA-MAASHAADA-SHAKA-MACHAPALAM
 TALPAM-SWALPA-MURVEE /
 YESHAAM NIHASANGA-TAANGEE-KARANA PARINATA-SWAANTA-SANTOSHINASTE
 DHANYAAHA SANSYASTA-DAINYA-VYATIKARA-NIKARAAHA KARMA
 NIRMOOLYANTI //

(99) [On the life of a Sanyasi or an ascetic. This present verse is an extension of verse no. 98 above. Here the poet tells us about an ascetic who is able to eliminate all the effects of his past deeds known as 'Karma' (i.e. the complex of cause and effect that continues to grow even as desires and actions to fulfil them go on and on in an endless chain). This helps him to literally cleanse his inner self of all worldly contaminations and taints, and thus pave his own way for attaining liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.]

Blessed are the noble souls who can rely on their hands to perform good, righteous and auspicious deeds as a means to virtually clean the dirt that has stuck to these hands (i.e. to these ascetics) over many births, who are content with bland food gathered in their open palms as alms obtained from door to door during the course of their wanderings, who can do with the minimal of clothing, feeling that Mother Nature (the sky and the wind and the directions) has wrapped them from all the sides, who can treat the entire earth as their clean bed, who find contentment in whatsoever comes their way and are at peace with themselves by overcoming all desires and temptations pertaining to this gross material world as a means of purifying and calming their inner-self, and who have given up the bad habit of seeking favours from others, or having any sort of relationship or attachment with them. Such persons are indeed praiseworthy and deserve honour and respect.

[Since they have no attachment with anyone or any thing, they are free from any taint associated with any of the latter entities. This simply means that they are now in contact with only their own true 'self', and this 'self' is pure consciousness that is free from all corruptions and contaminations.]

मातर्मैदिनि तात मारुत सखे तेजः सुबन्धो जल
 भ्रातर्व्योम निबद्ध एव भवतामन्त्यः प्रणामाञ्जलिः ।
 युष्मत्सङ्गवशोपजातसुकृतस्फारस्फुरन्निर्मल -
 ज्ञानापास्तसमस्तमोहमहिमा लीये परब्रह्मणि ॥ १०० ॥

(100) mātarmēdini tāta māruta sakhē tējah subandhō jala
 bhrātarvyōma nibaddha ēva bhavatāmantyaḥ praṇāmāñjaliḥ ।
 yuṣmatsaṅgavaśōpajātasukṛtasphārasphurannirmala -
 jñānāpāstasamastamōhamahimā liyē parabrahmaṇi ॥ 100 ॥

(100) MAATARMEDINI TAATA MAARUTA SAKHE TEJAH SUBANDHO JALA
 BHRAATARVYOM NIBADDHA EVA BHAVATAAMANTYAHA PRANAAMAANJALIHA /
 YUSHMATSANGA-VASHOPAJAATA-SUKRITA-SPHAARASPHURANNIRMALA-

GYAANAAPAASTA-SAMASTA-MOHA-MAHIMAA LEEYE PARBRAHMANI //

(100) [Here the poet addresses all the five elements of Nature and pays his respects to them; he salutes them. This verse implies that he has finally dispensed with his gross body and has merged himself with the Elements. Meanwhile, his ‘self’, which is pure consciousness, has freed itself from the cage of the gross body and has now become one with the cosmic Consciousness. When this state of dissolution is achieved, there is no return to the cycle of birth and death again. It’s a creature’s final liberation and deliverance from this vicious cycle; it’s the salvation and emancipation of his ‘self’.]

‘Oh Earth, my mother! Oh Wind, my father! Oh Fire, my friend! Oh Water, my affectionate relative! Oh Sky, my brother! I am paying my last respects to you and salutations to you with clasped hands.

I thank you all very much for helping me perform my duties in a righteous way, which in turn helped me to accumulate merit by virtue of which I am able to finally cast away all my attachments and infatuations with this material world, overcome all delusions, and by means of knowledge I have also got rid of ignorance. This has now enabled me to cheerfully and willingly embrace the supreme Brahm and merge myself with him. [I am so grateful to you all that you have aided in my liberation and deliverance, in my salvation and emancipation.]’

[The gross body is made of five basic elements listed in this verse. Like the ingredients of any medicine, these elements effectively control the actions of the body. For this purpose, they have been personified as different Gods, viz. the Wind God who moves the body and its parts, the Fire God that keeps the body warm and the spark of life active in it, and the Water God that fills the body with fluid and acts as a medium for all the organs to remain soft and cushioned; it also acts to offset the scorching effect of the Fire God. All these Gods live in the space of the Sky, and have Earth as their base.

But all these Gods are only junior gods and they work under the command of the Supreme God who is known as Brahm. This Brahm is pure Consciousness at the cosmic level of creation, and it is the same Consciousness that lives in the body of the ascetic as his Atma.

So in effect it means that an individual ascetic is an image of the macrocosmic form of Brahm at the level of the microcosm. When all barriers of delusions that create duality are removed, what essentially remains is one entity.

For instance, a thousand cups of water filled from a sea would contain nothing but the sea in a miniscule form. There is no difference between any of the samples of water kept in these cups and the water of the sea! If any one of the cups is broken above the surface of the sea, its contents fall back into its parent body, the sea, to become one with it and indistinguishable from it. This is what that is meant here.]

Thus ends “Vairagya Shatkam” of king-sage Bhartrihari.

-----*****-----

Appendix

About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
- (b) www.pothi.com (in 'paper-back book' + 'e-book' versions),
- (c) www.draft2digital.com (in 'e-book' version) through the following platforms: (i) Apple (ibooks), (ii) Barnes & Noble (nook), (iii) Kobo, (iv) Page Foundry, (v) Scribd, (vi) Tolino etc.:-

(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A-1) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi

Ramayan” based on Tulsidas’ Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) “Narad Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) “Shandilya Bhakti Sutra”—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitalawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitalawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(B) The following Books have been published in ‘Printed-Book Deluxe Editions’ by a reputed Indian Publisher (details given below) :

1. Detailed English renderings, with explanatory notes and commentaries of the 108 Upanishads classified according to the Vedic tradition = 6 volumes; 18 parts. [Vol. 1=Rig Veda Upanishads; Vol. 2= Sam Veda Upanishads; Vol. 3= Shukla Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 4= Krishna Yajur Veda Upanishads; Vol. 5= Atharva Veda Upanishads; Vol. 6= Vedanta Concepts explained with specific references to the relevant Upanishads.]

2. English rendering of Adbhut Ramayan by sage Valmiki.
3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
4. English rendering of Devi Puran’s Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.
5. A Divine Biography of Lord Ram & Glory of Lord’s Holy Name.

Name and contact of Publisher of above Printed Books listed under (C):

Chaukhamba Publishing House, Delhi. [Sri Neeraj Gupta.]

Email < chaukhambapublishinghouse@gmail.com >

< chaukhamba_neerj@yahoo.com >

Postal Address: 4697/2, Street no. 21-A, (HDFC Bank wali Gali),

Ansari Road, Darayaganj, Delhi—110002.

Phone: Mobile (Neeraj Gupta)—+919811133683

Office: 011-23286537; 011-32996391

(C) Book under preparation:

A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’ is under preparation. It will be a unique Book and an elaborate one, as it would run into many thousands of pages that would endeavour to explain each single verse of Ram Charit Manas in detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

Contact details of Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia—

Postal address:-36-A, Rajghat Colony, Parikrama Marg, P.O.—Ayodhya, Pin—224123, Distt. Ayodhya (Faizabad), U.P. India.

Phone:—(India) +919451290400; +919935613060.

Website: < www.tulsidas-ram-books.weebly.com >

Email of Author: (i) < ajaichhawchharia@gmail.com >

(ii) < ajaikumarbooks@gmail.com >

Archive.org: < https://archive.org/details/@ajai_kumar_chhawchharia >

Facebook ID < www.facebook.com/ajaikumarchhawchharia8 >

Linkedin: < www.linkedin.com/AjaiKumarChhawchharia >

Goodreads:

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/991710.Ajai_Kumar_Chhawchharia